Valley Voice

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Steve Worthley: 'No Time to Rest on Our Laurels'

JOSEPH OLDENBOURG

Four years ago, deep in a recession and in the face of prevailing anti-incumbency, Tulare County Supervisor Steve Worthley won re-election by only 109 votes.

"There was a tremendous amount of negative publicity," Worthley said, "primarily engineered by the *Visalia Times-Delta*. We were in their paper practically every week."

Steve Worthley

But Worthley also credited his then opponent, Brian Rouch, with running a tough campaign by moving to Worthley's hometown of Dinuba and telling people that Worthley was not going to run for re-election. "It was kind of a classic carpetbagger situation," he said. This year, at least so far, Worthley is running unopposed for the District 4 seat. "You have your own district," he said, "but you represent the whole county. The county is doing well, but it's not a time to rest on our laurels."

Worthley, 60, first elected to the board in 1998, has been financially conservative in his approach, opposing such things as a county business tax and the High-Speed Rail (HSR). The county, according to Worthley, has recently been able to add $2 million to its reserves. As for the HSR, he believes that, like many a previous government project, it will come in neither on time or on budget.

"It makes zero sense at this juncture because the state of California has a balance sheet that is anything but positive."

The bottom line is important to Worthley. When asked what the theme of this election cycle would be, he was straightforward: "The theme would be that the county is doing very well financially and administratively, and we need to continue to go down that road. We need to take advantage of the circumstances and move forward. Costs are down. We need to continue down a stable financial path and pursue opportunities as they come along."

"Hopefully," he said, "people have

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Stan Carrizosa, president/superintendent of College of the Sequoias, and Thea Trimble, academic senate president, present a 'status thermometer' showing the college's improvement. Photo by Daniel Nunez.

College of the Sequoias Out of Woods on Accreditation

TONY MALDONADO

On Monday, February 10, staff and students were told that after a year's work, the College of the Sequoias was taken off of 'show cause' status and put on 'warning,' a much less severe status.

The 'warning' status is the least serious the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) is able to give; though the name is foreboding, it is a significant improvement for the college, whose 'show cause' status was one step above revocation of accreditation.

Though newly appointed COS President/Superintendent Stan Carrizosa announced that the college was removed from Show Cause sanctions the week before the announcement, members of the college community were still unsure of what status the ACCJC awarded the college before Monday's announcement.

In stark contrast to the same type of announcement last year – in which Carrizosa said that the show cause notice was, "the worst thing that would ever confront College of the Sequoias," the mood was cheerful and celebratory; an internal forum opened with members of the college's "Accreditation Response Task Force" dancing into the college's lecture hall to Pharrell Willams' song "Happy."

"Based on where we were a year ago," Carrizosa told the audience, "this is the very best that we could have hoped for."

"I don't think you can imagine doing any better than this."

He told the Voice as much last year.

"The best we can realistically hope for is being placed on 'probation' [a status more serious than 'warning']," Carrizosa said in August, "or having our Show Cause extended."

Only three recommendations remain for the college to address in the ACCJC's new report. They all

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The endangered mountain yellow-legged frog.

Local National Parks Plan to Restore Aquatic Ecosystems

STEVE PASTIS

The plan to remove non-native trout from some higher elevation lakes in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks appears to be heading for approval later this year. The goal of the plan, which was designed by local national park staff, is to restore the original aquatic ecosystems and the populations of the original wildlife, including the mountain yellow-legged frog, now considered an endangered species.

The plan calls for the removal of trout from 87 lakes and ponds, or slightly less than 16% of the 549 lakes and ponds in the two local national parks. The process will take more than 30 years, at a cost of $200,000 a year, according to Danny Boiano, aquatic ecologist at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

"We finished the public comment period and now we have to analyze it," Boiano said. "We need to reply to every substantive comment."

Public meetings in Three Rivers, Fresno and Bishop were held in November, and additional written comments were received up until the December 17 deadline.

"We received comments that were expected," Boiano said. "We expected a part of the public to support it. We expected a part of the public to be concerned about the use of piscicides (chemical substances poisonous to fish)."

Another concern, which was raised

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Tulare County Unemployment Numbers Decline in 2013

STEVE PASTIS

Last year was a good year for the national job market, maybe not the great year that some people needed, but a good one. The U.S. economy added 2.2 million jobs. Cautious optimism reigned for most of the year.

Adam Peck, executive director of the Tulare County Workforce Investment Board.

Then the final monthly employment numbers for 2013 were released.

The national economy added only 74,000 jobs in December, a little more than one-third of what was expected. Economists were more than a little surprised. Investors were more than a little nervous.

When the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics released its December numbers, one person who remained calm, possibly even pleased, was Adam Peck, executive director of the Tulare County Workforce Investment Board.

"We are heading in the right direction with the lowest unemployment in six years," said Peck. "That's a positive thing."

He noted that the unemployment numbers at the end of 2013 were down 2-1/2% (to 13.4%) in the county, compared with the numbers at the end of 2012 (15.9%). "That's one of the bigger drops we've ever seen.

"Every month since September 2011, the unemployment rate has been lower than the same month the year before," he said. "That's a run of 27 straight months."

Peck acknowledged that there are still a lot of people in Tulare County

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

The Secret to Eternal Life

For countless thousands of years, humankind has run, jumped, swam and thrown things all in an effort either to procure food or else keep from becoming it. Walking upright, in fact--and all the activity that allows--is a signature characteristic of our species. I would even argue that we appreciate athletic excellence not merely for competition's sake, or any recollection of our more sporting, youthful, selves: there may be some deep evolutionary impulse--something akin to muscle memory--that keeps us fans on the edge of our collective seats. So I understand the Olympics--at least the traditional, summer games.

I run 36 miles a week, which works out to six six-mile runs. And I loathe it, every atrocious step. Let me stipulate here that when much younger I was, with the proper inspiration, capable of covering three miles in roughly 15 minutes. But I never really tried to emulate any track stars; let's call the proper inspiration--I don't know--Lisa. Now though, on a good day, I'm doing well to complete my six miles in 54 minutes--during which I listen to up-tempo music and think, literally, about everything. Yet one thought dutifully recurs: It's a damn good thing I'm not running a marathon.

Still, I do not miss the days of my youth--especially now that I've found the secret to eternal life: Watch figure skating on television. It is interminable. Even the so-called short program seems to go on forever; then each routine is replayed and rehashed, dissected down to the faults or flawlessness of the footwork in, frankly, silly images and arcane terminology. A skater may perform a Lutz or a Salchow, execute an axle, flip or toe-loop, and accomplish these in doubles or triples--but it looks to me like someone simply jumping and twirling. Sure, I couldn't do it--not the landing, anyhow--and when done well it's undeniably graceful. But who cares? Nobody really HAS to figure skate, at least not in the way that humans have had to run and jump since time immemorial.

And lest we forget: the judging. It was bad enough when done in dishonest blocs, but I'm still no fan of anything where compulsory elements are married up with degrees of difficulty to produce style points. I distrust style points. Give me the sports where time and/or distance matter more than style. Picture Usain Bolt having to jump and twirl a certain number of times during the length of the 100 meters. It's ridiculous.

I'm not a complete curmudgeon. I'll admit that I very much enjoy watching figure skating with my wife. But I like it because of her, because she likes it and I love her--and because she explains it to me. She also explains gymnastics to me during the summer games, even though I think anyone who has ever climbed a tree almost instinctively understands that sport. I certainly would never watch figure skating alone; well, I would if they would bring back the part of the competition where athletes used to have to try to cut a perfect figure eight on the ice. Isn't that how figure skating got its name?

I also like all the Alpine and Nordic skiing, the biathlon and--for reasons I'm uncertain of--curling. In general, though, the winter Olympics leave me...cold.

This year at least, that's something of an irony. Have you been following any of the coverage from Sochi? That's my kind of winter. For the past two days here it's been 75 degrees and sunny. That's my kind of winter, too. The expression "Hot enough for you?" does not apply to me. A few summers back the mercury rose to 113 degrees, and my response was to mow the lawn. When I took our youngest son to Arizona one July to look at universities it was warm there, almost actually hot. The dashboard thermometer of our rental car read 114. We didn't turn on the air conditioner. But I digress. When you look at the winter Olympics on television you expect to see snow, well, everywhere about the venue-- not just atop its surrounding peaks. It is strange to see so much greenery in Sochi. Equally strange is the severe cold that the southern part of our own country has suffered this winter.

But what is not strange--sadly, because it has become all too commonplace--is the ever-looming threat of terrorism. That nothing has thus far occurred at the games is their sole shining success. Despite--at $50 billion--being the most expensive Olympics ever staged, reports from Sochi have been almost uniformly awful. Initially, it was unpaid and disgruntled security guards: could they be relied upon? Then it became apparent that the Russians, much like our own NSA, were listening in on privileged communications. Next, the facilities themselves--thrown together with all the care, say, of a fresh gold rush town--were feared to be substandard. Bob Costas' eyes went flooey. Finally, the weather, at least for winter, has been awful. By which I mean warm. Complaints have been legion about conditions on the downhill slopes and the half pipe. Still, the games go on.

That's because they have the antidote to everything. What do you turn to when besieged by misfortune? What do you turn to when, despite all of its troubles, life appears--paradoxically--too short? You turn the channel to the short program. In short, you turn to figure skating.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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POLITICAL FIX

CATHERINE DOE

CARLTON JONES ENDORSED BY CENTRO MEXICANO AMERICAN LATINO FOR THE 26TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

During a candidates' forum for the 26th State Assembly District, Carlton Jones, vice mayor of Tulare, won the endorsement of Centro Mexicano American Latino (CMAL). On Sunday, February 9th, all five candidates participated in a forum put on by CMAL, in conjunction with Porterville Immigration Youth United.

"They were very qualified, very professional candidates. It was difficult to select just one," said John Duran, president of CMAL. Mr. Duran said that they chose Vice Mayor Jones because of his sincerity and the fact that he would best represent the people of Tulare County. "Carlton is the kind of caliber of person we are looking for. We feel he can do the job that needs to get done." The group also took into consideration that as a registered Democrat, Mr. Jones won his city council seat, twice, in a predominately Republican district. They see him as very electable.

With 43.7% of the voters registered Republicans, and only 33.5% as Democrats, it would seem that Republican Rudy Mendoza would have this election all sewn up. But not much light can be seen between former Democrat Mr. Mendoza and Mr. Jones, a very conservative Democrat.

When presented with the fact that the 26th Assembly District was considered "safe Republican," Mr. Duran said it's not all about money. "It's about people power. The people will prevail if we get out there and do voter registration."

The 26th Assembly District election has been anything but dull. Two weeks ago, candidate Derek Thomas, also of Tulare, accused Mr. Jones of assault after a meeting on the COS campus. Tim Ward, Tulare County District Attorney, received the complaint a few days later but didn't take the case. He has publicly endorsed Rudy Mendoza. Mr. Ward turned the case over to the Kern County District Attorney's Office, which didn't file criminal charges against Mr. Jones for lack of evidence.

IT'S JUST A FLUKE

Just in case anyone forgot about the Republican base's unease with women having sex, Sandra Fluke has entered the political scene. A Democrat and an attorney, Ms. Fluke first considered running for retiring Rep. Henry A. Waxman's congressional seat, but decided instead to stay local and run for the 28th District State Senate seat currently held by Ted Lieu, D-Torrance. Ms. Fluke felt that she could make more of a difference in the state legislature than in Congress.

Ms. Fluke became famous in 2012 when Rep. Darrell Issa, R-San Diego, blocked her from testifying in front of a Congressional Committee on contraception, opting instead for an all-male panel. After several female legislators walked out, Ms. Fluke was invited back to testify for an informal congressional hearing where she explained why contraception should be covered by health insurance. This prompted our national brain trust, Rush Limbaugh, to exclaim she was having so much sex she couldn't afford her birth control. After calling her a slut and demanding sex tapes, Ms. Fluke rose to national notoriety and was a featured speaker at the Democratic National Convention.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Ms. Fluke said, "I am committed to continuing that fight in Sacramento, working to protect our environment, ensure our access to health care, and create the jobs that are desperately needed. While I strongly considered offering my candidacy for Congress, I feel there is a better way for me to advance the causes that are important to our community."

MAKING HISTORY - MAYBE

Most people have heard of Log Cabin Republicans, but has a Log Cabin Republican ever been elected to federal office? Openly gay Republicans have been elected to local posts and state assemblies, but no Republican has ever been openly gay when first elected to Congress. This may change in 2014, and California might help lead the way.

For election year 2014, there are three openly gay men running for Congress and, not surprisingly, all three come from states where same-sex marriage is legal. Two of the candidates are married. Each will be running against a Democratic incumbent, and with a 90% re-election rate for incumbents, none of these races will be easy.

The Republican with the best chance of winning is former San Diego City Council Member Carl DeMaio. He is running against a Democratic first-timer, Scott Peters, who, according to the *Cook Report*, is considered very vulnerable. Congressional District 52 is evenly split among independents, Republicans and Democrats, but leans Republican. There are two other Republicans running for the 52nd District congressional seat but don't seem to pose a serious threat. Mr. DeMaio and Mr. Peters will win the June primary and go on to face each other in the November election.

Former State Senator Richard Tisei from Massachusetts and former business school dean, Dan Innis from New Hampshire are the two other openly gay candidates running for Congress.

Republican presidential candidate, Rick Santorum, once compared homosexual acts to child molestation and bestiality. That led House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, to pledge public support for gay Republicans. Boehner traveled to Massachusetts in 2012 to help raise money for Mr. Tisei, who notes that more than 70 members of Congress supported his last campaign.

Democrats currently have eight openly gay members serving in Congress, including Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin, who last year became the nation's first openly gay senator.

An openly gay Rrpublican incumbent has been elected, but only one, and that was back in the 1990's. It was Rep. Jim Kolbe of Arizona who retired in 2006. First elected in 1984, he disclosed his sexual orientation in 1996.

REPUBLICANS ON A ROLL

Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway, of Tulare, issued the following statement regarding Kevin Faulconer's victory in the San Diego mayoral race:

"Congratulations to Kevin, his entire campaign team, and the army of volunteers from across the state who worked so hard to earn a solid win. Kevin's common sense platform of reform resonated with voters across party lines who needed a strong leader to move the city forward. Last night's victory, coupled with Andy Vidak's win last summer, are previews of Republicans' momentum in the year ahead. Republicans are on a winning streak which gives me great hope that, this fall, we will continue to flex our political muscle and rebuild our party."

Democrats will retain control of the California legislature this election, but what the Republicans are hoping to do is end the Democratic two-thirds supermajorities. Given these last two victories, the momentum is on the Republican's side.

Of course, Democrats are being a huge help in the matter. One Democratic Senator, Rod Wright, has just been convicted of several felonies and will soon need to vacate his office. Another Democrat, Sen. Ron Calderon, is not far behind. Once Sen. Wright is gone the Democrats will have 27 votes in the senate. One more loss and there goes their supermajority.

Dan Walters of the *Fresno Bee* gives the Republicans an even chance of regaining enough seats to make them relevant again on such votes as taxes and constitutional amendments. "Bottom line: a better than 50-50 chance for the Senate's supermajority to disappear, but a less than 50-50 chance in the Assembly."

A FIREWALL OF GENIUS

"Damn it, Jim--I'm a doctor, not a brick layer," said Dr. McCoy in one of the more famous lines out of the original Star Trek show. Despite his protestations, the doctor managed to fix the alien life form, thereby saving the Enterprise to explore new galaxies. This same ingenuity was employed by the Republicans when they created their new political firewall, erected in dozens of states around the country, which lead to their taking control of Congress in 2010, and to keeping control of Congress in 2012.

How is it possible that the minority party took over the house in 2010, and then retained it in 2012?

Big-time Republican donors were persuaded by political strategists that their dollars could go much further on the local level than in the morass of inertia that is Washington. Political nonprofits, conservative donors and conservative PACs shuffled their money from states with lenient campaign financing rules to thousands of local races in swing states around the country in an effort to flip state legislatures to Republican control.

This financial shuffling succeeded, and in 2010 Republicans moved a dozen more states to sole Republican control. That meant a total of 25 states were under Republican control during a census year and thus were in Republican control for redistricting. They took the opportunity to carve each state up into complicted puzzle pieces that concentrated Democrats into the fewest districts possible. The result? In 2012, the first election after redistricting, Democrats received one million more votes than the Republicans, but lost the house majority by 33 seats.

According to the *New York Times*, "The Republicans could use their new state house majorities to build a firewall in the United States House of Representatives: congressional districts so favorably drawn for Republicans that the party's House majority would endure for a decade."

Of our 50 states, only 13 have a legislature that is truly bipartisan. Twenty-three states are controlled by Republicans in the Senate, Assembly and the Governor's office. Thirteen have Democratic control, including California.

This has left the more cynical political pundits to surmise that voters no longer pick their representatives, but instead candidates choose their voters. How else could you explain a 13% approval rate for congress and a 90% reelection rate for congressional candidates? You can explain it many ways, but gerrymandering is definitely one of them. And zeroing-in on local elections was genius.

How did gerrymandering push California to Democratic control? It didn't, because in 2010 voters approved a ballot measure to appoint an impartial panel to redraw the districts. California is what you would call an organic dictatorship.

What does this mean for 2014's midterm elections? With gerrymandered districts, and a non-presidential election, where low voter turnout always works to the Republican's advantage, Republicans can count on picking up a few more congressional seats. They might also have a chance to take over the Senate. The Democrats finally cottoned on to the fact that they need to concentrate on state level elections and won some states back in 2012. But the districts have been redrawn and the Democrats won't have another opportunity until 2020. By then, there will have been a game-change.

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Visalia Embraces Trap, Neuter and Release

CATHERINE DOE

Visalia Mayor Steve Nelsen often says during city council meetings how compassionate Visalians are, and that was proven once again on Presidents' Day Weekend.

Dr. Nanette Kuswa, owner of Companion Animal Medical Center, assembled a group of volunteers to conduct a free spay and neuter clinic on Sunday, February 16th. In the span of four hours, two doctors, five staff, and six members of the Visalia Feral Cat Coalition (VFCC) volunteered their time to neuter 18 feral cats in Visalia's first mass clinic. They also checked for ear mites, de-flead the cats, tested them for leukemia, and gave vaccinations.

Trapping the night before the mass spay and neuter clinic.

The Visalia Feral Cat Coalition employs the Trap, Neuter and Release philosophy. Trap, Neuter and Release (TNR) has been used in Europe to combat their feral cat population for the last 30 years. The program has been used in California for the last 20 years, but for some reason not in the Central Valley. That all changed last week.

The process for the mass sweep and clinic actually started weeks before when a commercial property owner and the manager of a public building in Visalia needed help with their feral cat population. The property manager and property owner from both locations happened to come into contact with VFCC to ask for help at the same time. Because both properties had about 20 or more cats, and kitten season was here, the committee decided to do a mass sweep. After Dr. Kuswa donated her services, the committee members pooled all the traps they could find. On Saturday night, the traps were set at the two locations. Many of the traps were filled by 9pm and Dr. Kuswa personally came out to pick up the cats and keep them at her office overnight. The rest of the traps were left out and brought in by VFCC the next morning.

The commercial property and public building are not being disclosed so people don't dump cats at those locations thinking they will be taken care of.

8am, Sunday morning, the 18 cages were lined up outside the clinic according to where they were trapped. The clinic was separated into stations with instructions taped up to the wall so each assigned group knew exactly what they were responsible for. The volunteers working on the cats, except for the VFCC members, were actually Dr. Kuswa's technicians and Dr. Carol Adams who works at the clinic. Even the receptionist came in on her day off and put on a pair of scrubs.

The overall sweep was a success with a few lessons learned. "For the next sweep I'm going to reorganize the duties of each station," said Dr. Kuswa. Just the sheer volume of cats created the potential for mistakes. A six-month-old female woke up after her operation, but before she could get her vaccinations. One of the techs accidently got squirted in the eye with anesthetic and when pulling out one of the cats from the carrier the tech was bitten and a volunteer scratched. "That's the first time in my eight years doing this that I have gotten bit," said the tech, still a little in shock.

Male cats are neutered and vaccinated.

When asked how she felt the first sweep went, Dr. Kuswa said, "I think it went well. We could have done more but it's OK. Hopefully we will be able to watch these guys and see if they're less of a nuisance and more complacent. Most fixed cats just start enjoying life. The cats become healthier and the colony size will stabilize and go down."

By 12:30pm, all cats were recovering in their cages, surgical implements were washed, and the floor mopped. Even though the next day was a holiday, Dr. Kuswa had a full schedule of appointments and surgeries scheduled so everything had to be ready. The VFCC divided up the cats to take home so they could recover before being released the next day.

Releasing a healthy cat back to its home.

"It's kitten season and won't this property owner be happy when there are no more new cats," said VFCC member Dianne Dunbar. Cost to the property owner? Absolutely nothing.

Out of a love for cats, a group of like-minded people decided to organize the Visalia Feral Cat Committee. "When people aren't educated they just want the cats removed and put down. But when they see that new feral cats just take their place they want a more permanent solution. Removing the cats creates a vacuum effect," said Dunbar, so now the Visalia Feral Cat Coalition offers TNR as a more humane way of dealing with them. According to Ally Cat Allies, "Feral cats are not adoptable. Their home is outside, not on someone's couch." It was noted that after Mooney Grove started trapping again this year that two new cats have moved in to replace the several cats presumably put down.

Dr. Kuswa ended the day's work by saying, "My main message is that I hope people will see this as a viable option to the never-ending cycle of euthanasia."

Accreditation

Continued from p. 1

revolve around the college completing its new governance procedures.

- Planning — The ACCJC created a fresh 2014 Planning recommendation, replacing the old planning recommendation. The team recommended the college fully follow its newly created COS 2.0 Model for Integrated Planning, showing "integration of institutional planning, resource allocation, implementation and re-evaluation."
- Research Capacity — The visiting team stated: "...in order to fully meet Standard IV.B.2.b [ensuring that data, research and analysis are guiding planning at the college], the College must demonstrate during its next evaluation cycle that data continues to guide effective planning, assessment, and decision-making."
- Evaluation of Processes — In the Show Cause team report, the visiting team relates this to the aforementioned Planning recommendation.

"Instead of there being seven recommendations and 38 different standards [cited, as in the original Show Cause report], there are three recommendations that remain and there are the related standards that go with those," Carrizosa said.

Thea Trimble, pictured, is the head of the college's Academic Senate. Photo by Daniel Nunez

The college put significant effort into meeting each of the ACCJC's recommendations and standards. It hired two consultants, assembled teams from across the college, and had sets of staff and students work tirelessly throughout the past year – and some throughout the summer break – to implement new programs, create "COS 2.0" manuals, and ensure the college's compliance.

The college also purchased software to help meet Student Learning Outcome goals and meet standards for equitability of services for online and on-campus students.

The assembled audience applauds during the announcement. Photo by Daniel Nunez

During a campus-wide forum last year, Carrizosa said the college had earned praise for its strategies from as high as the Chancellor of California's Community Colleges, Brice Harris.

"The word out among community colleges is that we should bottle how they're doing it at College of the Sequoias, because that's the process that people should be looking at to model," Carrizosa said, quoting Harris.

During the February 10 forum, Thea Trimble, president of the college's Academic Senate, spoke about a recent accreditation conference she attended. At the conference, representatives from Cuesta College – a college that COS looks at as a model for its accreditation, and has sought help and advice from throughout the last year – spoke about their experience going from Show Cause to full reaffirmation.

"To a person, they described how much better they are for having gone through this experience, how much better their processes are, how much better they understand how to work together, and how to get through difficult times," Trimble said.

"I want us to hold on to that. They're a year out from us. We're going to be right where they were when we go to that accreditation institute next year."

The college needs to continue to follow its "COS 2.0 internal processes to prove to the commission that it has fully embraced and adopted the recommendations handed down by the ACCJC in its initial Show Cause report and in the new Warning follow-up report.

Administration and faculty are confident that the college will achieve full reaffirmation, and are looking forward to the future. To achieve full reaffirmation of accreditation, the college must submit a report this October to the ACCJC.

"I think that we [the college community] are very proud of the work that we've done," said Trimble, "and how we came together to get it done."

Visalia Ordered to Conduct District Elections in 2016

STAFF REPORTS

The City of Visalia has been ordered to accept district elections and to hold city council elections in even years beginning in 2016. The judgment was entered by Judge Melinda Reed on February 6, after the city did not contest the case presented to the court. The judgment ends a lawsuit that was filed against the city on December 19 by Visalia residents Carlos Medina, Dr. Robert Aguilar, Miguel Fierro and Louis Montion.

The lawsuit claimed that the city's at-large elections violated the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 (CVRA) because there was a pattern of racially polarized voting that impaired Hispanics from electing their preferred candidates. The lawsuit also cited that there had only been one Latino individual that had ever been elected to the Visalia City Council, and that despite having more than 46% of the population, there was currently no Latino member on the council.

Visalia City Hall

At-large and odd year elections have been required in the city's charter. The city council had twice put a question on the ballot, in 1994 and in 2012, asking if voters wanted to go to district elections, but it was rejected both times by a significant margin.

"This has been a difficult decision for the city council," said Mayor Steve Nelsen. "We respect the will of the Visalia voters to continue with at-large elections that have been part of the city's charter for more than 90 years. But legal counsel advised us that based on current California law, and in the interest of minimizing the potentially significant litigation cost to the city, our prudent option was to not contest this case and to accept a court-ordered judgment that moves the city to district-based elections in even years."

The judgment also extends the terms of the current city council members by one year, to the next even year, to facilitate the transition to even year elections. Council Members Amy Shuklian and Bob Link's terms are extended to 2016, and Mayor Nelsen, Vice Mayor Warren Gubler and Council Member Greg Collins terms are extended to 2018.

Aubry Stone, president and CEO of the California Black Chamber of Commerce presents a "Bridge Builder" award to Assemblywoman Connie Conway at the organization's annual legislative reception in Sacramento. Photo by Christian Koszka, Assembly Republican Caucus.

CA Black Chamber Honors Assembly GOP Leader Conway with 'Bridge Builder' Award

STAFF REPORTS

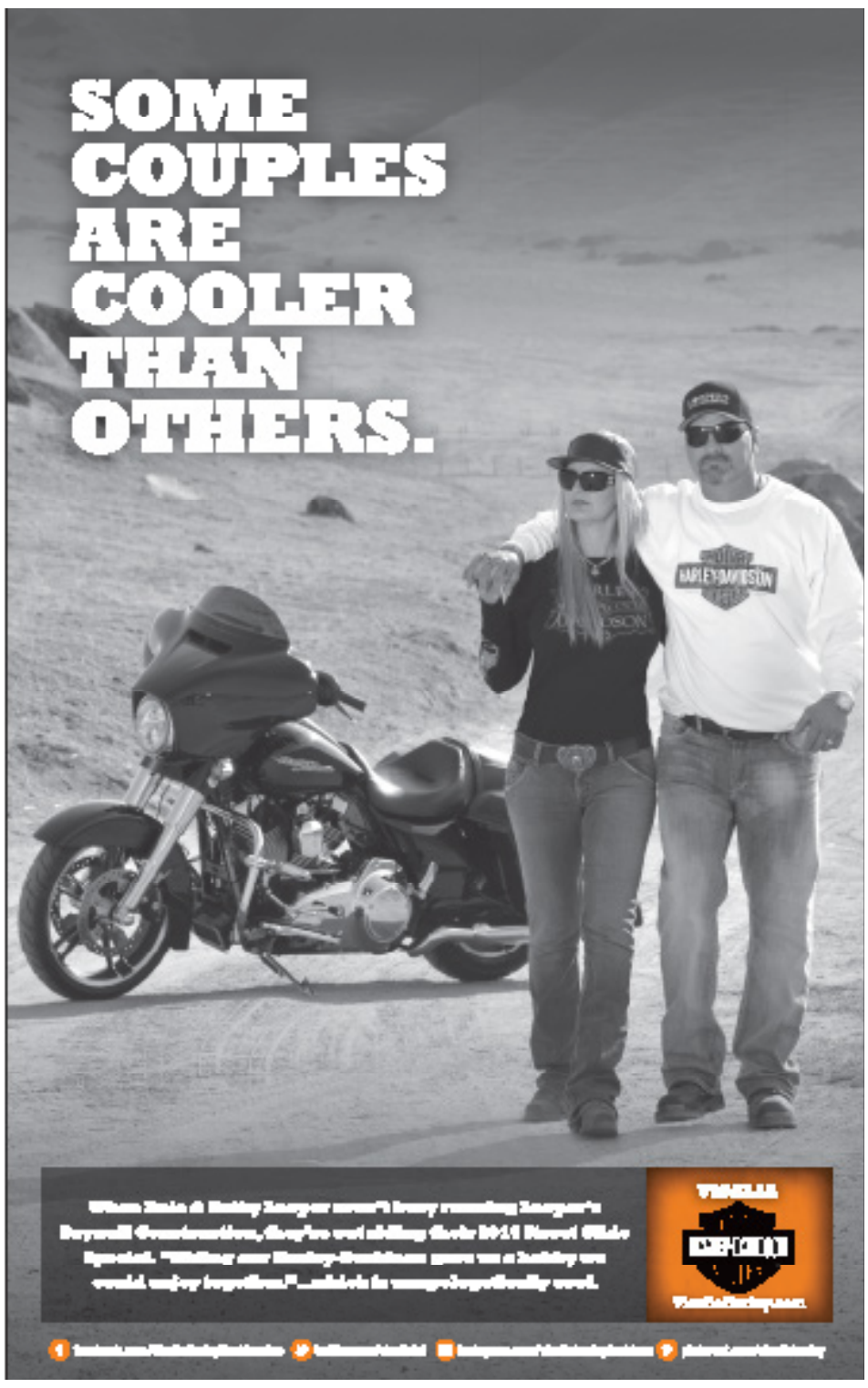
The California Black Chamber of Commerce honored Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway, of Tulare, with its "Bridge Builder" award last month. Aubry Stone, president and CEO of the California Black Chamber of Commerce presented the award to Assemblywoman Conway at the organization's annual legislative reception.

The California Black Chamber of Commerce selected Conway for the award in recognition of her efforts to improve California's job climate.

"Assemblywoman Conway has done an outstanding job promoting legislation that helps the state's economy while ensuring that the Golden State is an ideal location for all citizens to work, live and recreate," said Stone.

"The California Black Chamber of Commerce is a strong voice for the hardworking business owners who serve as the backbone of our economy," said Assemblywoman Conway. "I've enjoyed partnering with the chamber to make California a job-creating engine so that our small businesses can thrive."

Senator Holly Mitchell, Assembly Member Sebastian Ridley-Thomas and Assembly Chief Clerk E. Dotson Wilson also received recognition for their meritorious service at the reception.



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Participating in the February 15th ribbon-cutting ceremony were (left to right): Earlimart Public Utilities District Board Member Hershey Washington, White River Plaza Principal Max Becerra, Earlimart School District Board Trustee Brian Franks, Tulare County Economic Development Manager Michael Washam, Tulare County Tax Collector/Controller Rita Woodward, Tulare County Supervisor Phil Cox, Dollar General Store Manager Javier Gonzales, Dollar General District Manager for Operations Bob Munoz, District Representative for State Senator Andy Vidak's Office Janie Sustaita and District Representative for Congressman David Valadao's Office Gaby Casteneda.

Dollar General Opens at White River Plaza in Earlimart

STAFF REPORTS

South Tulare County residents now have another retail option in the uninkorporated community of Earlimart.

The nation's newest Dollar General opened its doors at the White River Plaza, located at the northeastern corner of Avenue 56 (Sierra Highway) and CA State Route 99 on Saturday, February 15. The 9,100-square-foot building officially opened to the public with a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring prizes, store giveaways and food.

"This project really raises the bar and sets the standard," said Supervisor Phil Cox, chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, during his opening remarks at the event. "We are excited to have Dollar General here in Earlimart. They are going to make a difference in this community."

Dollar General District Manager Bob Munoz noted that the Dollar General stores in the Southern San Joaquin Valley generate the highest average per store sales than anywhere else in the country.

"Dollar General has more retail locations in the United States than any other retailer, with over 11,000 stores in 40 states from coast to coast," said Michael Washam, Tulare County Economic Development manager. "The new store will offer shoppers the products they use and replenish most frequently, such as packaged foods, snacks, pet supplies, health and beauty aids, cleaning supplies, paper products, basic apparel, housewares and seasonal items."

The Dollar General store is the second retailer to open at the White River Plaza development project. An AutoZone store opened its doors on December 12. The White River Plaza development represents the largest retail commercial development ever built within the community of Earlimart. Additional businesses are planned, including: a supermarket, national fast-food restaurants, and other retail and service businesses. White River Plaza should see more store openings in the latter part of 2014.

White River Plaza is a 7.5-acre development project that was approved in 2013 by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors. The project is being developed by two local economic development professionals, Tom Hocking and Max Bacerra.

"It is wonderful to be a part of the economic growth and progress of the Earlimart community," said Bacerra, principal of White River Plaza, LLC. "There are a variety of new retail and commercial opportunities that will be added to the White River Plaza retail shopping center. We plan to roll out more uses and businesses in 2014."

Kaweah Delta to Host Feb. 26 Heart Lecture and Health Fair

STAFF REPORTS

If you knew you were going to have a heart attack tomorrow, what would you change today?

This heart month, Kaweah Delta Health Care District will help Tulare County residents understand what changes they can make today to help prevent a cardiac episode in the future during its Be Heart Smart event on Wednesday, February 26. The event will take place from 4-7pm at The Lamp Liter Inn, 3300 W. Mineral King Ave. in Visalia.

"Nobody ever thinks they are going to have a heart attack. This is an event where we'll help people understand what to do daily to keep their hearts healthy," said Robbie Geide, director of Kaweah Delta's Cardiac Catheterization Lab.

Beginning at 4pm, attendees will be offered the following free screenings (if they've fasted for four hours prior to the event): cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure and diabetic foot screenings. Reservations are not required.

Throughout the event, people can also visit informational booths. At 5:30pm, attendees will hear from a line-up of speakers including local physicians on how to stay heart healthy.

Before the event, people can find out if they are at risk for heart disease by taking a free health risk assessment at KaweahDelta.org and clicking on "Health Risk Assessments." Those deemed at highest-risk for heart disease will be offered a free one-on-one consultation with a Kaweah Delta staff member. Everyone who completes a health risk assessment by Friday, April 4, will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a Kindle Fire.

Heart disease includes conditions that affect the heart, such as coronary heart disease, heart attack, congestive heart failure and congenital heart disease. It's the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S. Each year about 785,000 Americans have their first heart attack, while another 470,000 people who have already had one or more have another.

For more information, visit www.kaweahdelta.org or follow Kaweah Delta on Twitter and Facebook.

FIRST 5 TULARE COUNTY

First 5 Announces Major Grant to ImagineU Children's Museum

STAFF REPORTS

First 5 Tulare County's commissioners last week voted to present ImagineU Children's Museum with a grant of $126,000 – one of the largest local grants to date for the museum, due to open in 2015.

The grant will sponsor the "Ready, Set, Grow" exhibit which will be designed for infants and toddlers, said Cheryl Christman, president of the museum's board of directors.

"This exhibit will include soft boulders for climbing, a tree house, a learning tree reading center, and various textures and levels so that young children can move, touch, grow and experience, all in a safe and age-appropriate exhibit," Christman explained. "The board of directors is so grateful to the First 5 commissioners for this huge step in our fundraising efforts."

Other family and child-friendly aspects of the "Ready, Set, Grow" exhibit include low walls that will allow adults to observe older children in other parts of the museum, adult seating, an area to "park" strollers, and a private nursing corner for breastfeeding.

"First 5's mission is to enhance the early development of children toddlers by funding programs that help in a variety of ways, including food and shelter, literacy support, dental health and more," noted Janet Hogan, executive director of First 5 Tulare County. "This exhibit turns play into learning, and will support children's cognitive, fine and gross motor skills, language and literacy, and social/emotional development. It fits very well with First 5's mission."

Other significant grants for the museum have been received from the State of California's Nature Education Facilities Grant, California Water Service Co. and the Mariachi Heritage Foundation.

First 5 Tulare County is funded by Proposition 10, the tobacco tax passed by voters in 1998. For information, call First 5 Tulare County at 622-8650 or visit www.First5tc.org.

Project Based Learning Transforms Classrooms

STAFF REPORTS

Robin Ryburn, a biology teacher at Tulare Union High School, describes a project she has done for years with her sophomore students. In the past, she says, students had been assigned to make a report on specific biologic processes related to cell biology or human physiology. This year, with training she received through the Tulare County Office of Education on Project Based Learning (PBL), Ryburn turned the assignment into a project with surprising results. Students were required to develop a children's storybook about the same material. They could choose from topics such as cellular transport, photosynthesis and cellular respiration, or they could focus on the body's nervous, digestion or respiration systems.

This exercise didn't just stay in her classroom. Ryburn arranged for her students to present their storybooks to a live audience – third-graders from neighboring Wilson Elementary. Initially, the Tulare Union students were apprehensive about writing and illustrating a science-based story that would appeal to a third-grade audience. Ryburn reports that they rose to the challenge.

"The projects were 100 times better than in years past," she says. "Because my students had an authentic audience with the third graders, it allowed them to move beyond regurgitating facts to me to really understanding their topic and creating a story that a child would understand."

Across the county, teachers are using PBL to transform the way that students learn. Teachers who have implemented the instructional method mention over and over that through PBL lessons their students are engaged, excited, thinking critically, solving problems and collaborating with their classmates.

"Students who usually 'fly under the radar' are engaged and learning at deeper levels through teamwork in PBL settings," says Visalia Technical Early College High School (VTEC) Principal Vicki Porter.

Over the past year, the Tulare County Office of Education has extensively supported PBL instruction through professional development trainings and the dedicated coaching work of Joy Soares, the Project Based Learning curriculum specialist with Educational Resource Services (ERS).

"We have made a significant commitment to furthering the use of Project Based Learning," says County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "In this age of Common Core Standards, we believe PBL is the tool to bring students the 21st century learning skills they need to be successful in college and in their careers."

Soares joined Educational Resource Services in January 2013. She is a national certified trainer through the Buck Institute for Education, a non-profit organization that creates, gathers, and shares high-quality PBL instructional practices. Soares is also a trainer with Linked Learning, a statewide initiative that TCOE and mentor district Porterville Unified co-lead in Tulare and Kings counties. The initiative seeks to implement career-themed partnerships to provide students with real-world career experiences while they are still in high school.

"The structured process of Project Based Learning is providing Tulare County teachers with an approach that will ensure students are learning rigorous academic standards, and developing the important career and college skills of collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking," says Soares. "At its core, PBL is designed to make learning experiences extremely relevant to students. Seeing the students throughout our county taking charge of their own learning has been an exciting outcome."

Monrovia Nursery's Orlando Bejar leads students on a tour of VTEC's arboretum, which was developed over many years by the College of the Sequoias agricultural programs. VTEC is one of the county's leading proponents of Project Based Learning. The VTEC students are documenting the plants in the garden and developing a website describing the characteristics and care of each.

Soares reports that a PBL resource page will be added to the popular TCOE Common Core Connect website (commoncore.tcoe.org) in April, along with the launch of TCOE's pblCORE, a series of trainings to support 21st century learning. On May 14, ERS will hold its first annual PBL-focused event entitled "A Night at the 21st Century Museum."

The PBL projects teachers are using in all subject matters vary widely. At Liberty School District in Tulare, students have launched a debate on the merits of instituting a school uniform.

Teacher Amy Scofield says, "I was blown away by the discussions happening in the student groups and seeing the life skills that were being developed right here in the classroom - healthy debate, presentation and genuine assessment. It is more work to develop the PBL lessons at first, and it is a little hard to let go and let the students take charge of their learning, but the rewards of seeing them do so are incredible."

Ryburn's biology storybook project wasn't an isolated PBL incident at Tulare Union High School. The entire science department is in the process of integrating PBL throughout its courses. Daniel Dutto reports that his integrated science students have been participating in the design of a pedestrian bridge with the involvement of City of Tulare engineers and an architect from Visalia.

Sycamore Valley Academy, an independent charter of Visalia Unified, is also using PBL extensively. Fourth-grade students Cadence, Holden and Alissa described their work on a PBL-based assignment on local Native Americans in terms of teamwork and collaboration. The teamwork was so successful, it inspired Alissa to do further research, while Cadence enjoyed the way that the group figured out their strengths in contributing to the project.

Principal/Superintendent Ruth Dutton says, "The PBL process is so respectful of student curiosity. It also affords a high level of tolerance for risk-taking, while helping students to develop socially and emotionally."

At VTEC, a charter high school of Visalia Unified, Principal Vicki Porter says that, "PBL provides the structure we were looking for. Teachers see how it addresses the standards, that it adds vigor to their lessons and increases student knowledge and critical thinking."

Last fall, the school, which is located on the former site of the COS Farm, invited horticulturalists from Monrovia Nursery Company to help students develop a plant cataloguing project. Students have been working through their plant science and marketing classes to identify all the plants in the school's existing arboretum. Over the course of several months, the class hopes to catalog the plants and create identity markers with a scan-able code linking visitors to a website with information on the plant and its care.

"Meeting the horticulturalists from Monrovia changed everything," says student Jose Servin, who is a member of the school's agriculture cohort. "It became real for me – a career that I would like to pursue." Jose says that he enjoys VTEC's PBL focus because he feels it gives him a sense of accomplishment and progress. "I've learned so much and at the end of the day, I don't want to go home," he laughs.

For more information on Project Based Learning and future trainings, call Joy Soares at 651-0501, or email jsoares@ers.tcoe.org.

Students from Sycamore Valley Academy share their PBL experiences with Educational Resource Services' Joy Soares (far right). Sycamore Valley teachers Jennifer Denham and Kevin Breakstone led the development of the students' PBL lessons.

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Over 650 Individuals Served at Sixth Annual Project Homeless Connect

On January 30, in the midst of much needed rain, 656 homeless individuals and families, as well as people on the brink of homelessness, received much needed services from more than 100 service providers. The event took place simultaneously in Hanford, Tulare and Visalia and was organized by the Kings/Tulare Continuum of Care on Homelessness with support from hundreds of sponsors and volunteers.

Project Homeless Connect is a one-day, one-stop event that assists individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the resources they need to overcome barriers to housing. The event provided participants access to a wide range of services from dental health to mental health, to the health of their pets. Other services included haircuts, access to mainstream benefits, legal assistance and housing resources. DMV was on hand to offer state ID cards. Services were geared towards all ages, from children and youth to adults and seniors.

"Serving so many people in one day is only possible because of the collaborative efforts of community agencies, both private and governmental, as well as the outstanding volunteers who assisted with the event," said Machael Smith, program manager of the Kings/ Tulare Continuum of Care. "Project Homeless Connect is about connecting people with services that remove barriers to housing. We were able to connect more than 100 people with replacement California ID cards and birth certificates. Without these forms of identification, one cannot obtain housing or secure employment."

What makes it so special is that everything in it is free — including the services of hundreds of volunteers who are on hand to assist participants throughout the day. The event was made possible with support from sponsors as well as support from partner agencies, businesses and concerned citizens throughout the community.

This year's event was combined with the Annual Point in Time Census Count. The census count is a one-night snapshot that enables communities to find out not just how many people are homeless, but who is homeless and more importantly, why they are homeless.

"We served 656 people at the Project Homeless Connect and also sent teams of people around the entire region in an effort to complete a survey for every street homeless person who did not attend the Project Homeless Connect," said Smith. "Those who provided a survey were given a bag with a blanket and toiletry items. The data collected from both events will inform our local community on the issue of homelessness and enable us to apply for various grant funding."

People who want to help can visit The Kings/Tulare Continuum of Care on Homelessness at www.kingstularecoc.org or like them on Facebook to keep informed about local homelessness, needs, solutions and opportunities to help in our community.

Exeter to Honor Volunteers at 91st Annual Banquet

STAFF REPORTS

Exeter's Man and Woman of the Year, Heritage, Beautification and Business of the Year will be honored at the Exeter Chamber of Commerce 91st Annual Banquet on February 22. The event honors those whose commitment, dedication and teamwork has made a positive impact on the people, quality of life and the business community of Exeter.

The honorees for the year 2013 are: Woman of the Year Valerie Agahi and Man of the Year Stan Dillon. Heritage Award recipients are Sally Brewer and David Nielsen.

The 2013 Business of the Year is the Exeter Lions Club and the Business Beautification Award recipient is Rocky Hill Community Church. Selection, in the case of the business, is made on community impact, developing a positive workforce and strong business principles. The beautification criteria is businesses that constantly work towards beautification, pride in business and community and by setting examples for others. The purpose of these awards is to increase public awareness of the vital role business plays within the community and to bestow recognition on those businesses that have achieved excellence in their field.

Sunset Waste Systems is proud to announce its Third Annual Recycler of the Year Award goes to Dan Espinola, City of Exeter Public Works operations manager who is being recognized as an Organization, Business, Individual, School or Recycling Education Program that fits the criteria and who contributes to the recycling efforts in the city of Exeter.

The Exeter Annual Banquet will be held February 22 at 6pm at the Exeter Veterans Memorial Building. Tickets are $40 and are available from the Exeter Chamber of Commerce.

Unemployment

Continued from p. 1

looking for work, "but we're not in a recession. If you look at things like sales tax, you will see it's at an all-time high.

"What people are concerned with is that the number of jobs being created isn't enough to provide the growth that the economy needs," Peck explained. "It wasn't that we were losing jobs; it was that the expectations for the size of job growth were higher than what we saw in December."

Many in Tulare County wouldn't know that the recession was over if they didn't read it in the newspaper.

"The problem is that Tulare County has always had high unemployment," said Peck. "In Tulare County, we're going to have to deliver jobs at a rate that other places don't have to.

"The city of Visalia has an unemployment rate that is lower than the state as a whole," he said. "It shows how tough things are in the agricultural areas."

People who have stopped looking for work are a contributing factor in lowering national unemployment numbers.

"People talk about people dropping out of the labor force, but here it's a change in the flow of immigration," said Peck. "You have labor coming in and out of the area that plays into it."

The reduced size of the Tulare County labor force is a major contributing factor in local unemployment numbers.

"Sometimes you drive down the unemployment rate by adding jobs, sometimes by decreasing the size of the labor force itself," said Peck, who noted that in Tulare County, the workforce population decreased by 4,300 from December 2010 to December 2013 (206,100 to 201,800), while the number of people employed here increased by 5,600 (169,100 to 174,700) during the same period.

Peck considers annual numbers more reliable than monthly numbers.

"The annual numbers take some of the noise out," he said, explaining that focusing on numbers from a single month is, "like watching a film one frame at a time."

He added that in the county, monthly agricultural employment numbers can fluctuate from one year to the next, depending on when crops hit.

The Tulare County Workforce Investment Board gathers information and uses it to help increase employment in the county, through information, education and training.

"We're trying to ensure that people understand the skills that are valued in the local economy," said Peck, adding that information about employment needs is gathered from local businesses. This kind of information recently resulted in the creation of a physical therapy assistant program at College of the Sequoias, and training in the new computer skills needed in manufacturing.

"We also work with employers directly because often they can't find the exact right person for a position," he added. "We offer on-the-job training for a percentage of the employees."

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New Study Shows Americans Eating Healthier

STAFF REPORTS

American adults are eating better, making better use of available nutrition information, and consuming fewer calories coming from fat and saturated fat, consuming less cholesterol and eating more fiber, according to a new report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service; Changes in Eating Patterns and Diet Quality Among Working-Age Adults, 2005-2010.

The study underscores the importance of robust efforts undertaken since 2009 to improve food choices and diet quality and ensure that all Americans have access to healthy food and science-based nutrition education and advice.

"The Obama Administration is working hard to empower the American public to make smart choices every day at school, at home and in their communities," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "We have made significant progress, but our work is not done. We will continue to invest in critical programs that expand the availability of healthy, safe, affordable food for all Americans."

The researchers found that use of nutrition information, including the nutrition facts panel found on most food packages, increased in recent years. Forty-two percent of working age adults and 57 percent of older adults reported using the Nutrition Facts Panel most or all of the time when making food choices. When asked about nutrition information in restaurants, 76 percent of working-age adults reported that they would use the information if it were available.

"We are pleased to hear that this study finds improvements in several key areas of the American diet," said Michael R. Taylor, deputy commissioner for foods and veterinary medicine at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. "FDA will soon propose an updated nutrition facts label designed to provide information that will make it even easier for people to make healthy choices."

Reduced consumption of food away from home (such as food from restaurants and fast food) accounted for 20 percent of the improvements in diet quality. A recent study found that during the recession of 2007-2009, U.S. household overall food expenditures declined approximately 5 percent, mostly due to a 12.9 percent decline in spending on food away from home. Calories consumed through food away from home dropped by 127 calories per day, and the average person ate three fewer meals and 1.5 fewer snacks per month away from home. Eating at home more often was also associated with more frequent family meals.

42 percent of working age adults and 57 percent of older adults reported using the Nutrition Facts Panel most or all of the time when making food choices.

The report also indicates changing attitudes toward food and nutrition. Compared with 2007, the percentage of working-age adults who believed they have the ability to change their body weight increased by three percentage points in 2010. During the same time period, the report shows there was little change in the importance that price played when making choices at the grocery store, but working-age adults placed increased importance on nutrition when choosing items to purchase.

"When individuals believe that their actions directly affect their body weight, they might be more inclined to make healthier food choices," said study author Jessica Todd, Ph.D., of the Economic Research Service.

The researcher used individual dietary intake data for working-age adults from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), which collects detailed individual and household information on a wide range of health-related topics through questionnaires, physical exams and lab work, in two-year segments. The survey is designed to be nationally representative, with a sample composed of 9,839 individuals. Overall, daily caloric intake declined by 78 calories per day between 2005 and 2010. There were overall declines in calories from total fat (3.3 percent), saturated fat (5.9 percent), and intake of cholesterol (7.9 percent). Overall fiber intake increased by 1.2 grams per day (7.5 percent).

This research was conducted by the Economic Research Service, which is a primary source of economic information and research at USDA.

Expanding the availability of healthy food to all Americans, while providing science-based nutrition information and advice, is a key focus of USDA's nutrition assistance programs and the Obama Administration. USDA is focused on strategies that empower families to make healthy food choices, including:

USDA's MyPlate symbol and the resources at ChooseMyPlate provide quick, easy reference tools to facilitate healthy eating on a budget for parents, teachers, healthcare professionals and communities. The site includes shopping strategies and meal planning advice to help families serve more nutritious meals affordably through its 10-Tips Nutrition Series and the Thrifty Food Plan.

USDA's SuperTracker, a free online planning and tracking tool, helps more than three million Americans improve food choices, maintain a healthy weight, and track physical activity on a daily basis.

America's students now have healthier and more nutritious school meals due to improved nutrition standards implemented as a result of the historic Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. USDA recently announced Smart Snacks in Schools, which sets healthy guidelines for all foods and beverages sold in school to ensure that students will be offered only healthier food options during the school day.

USDA expanded eligibility for $4 million in grants to improve access to fresh produce and healthy foods for SNAP shoppers at America's farmers markets. By increasing the number of farmers markets that are able to accept SNAP benefits, USDA is encouraging SNAP recipients to use their benefits to purchase and prepare healthy foods for their families.

Through USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food, the department has worked to increase access to nutritious food through the development of strong local and regional food systems. The number of farmers markets increased by more than 67 percent in the last four years and there are now more than 220 regional food hubs in operation around the country.

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Valley Congressmen Secure Funding for U.S. Citrus Industry

STAFF REPORTS

The U.S. House Appropriations Committee approved $20 million in funding to fight Huanglongbing (HLB) nationwide upon the recommendation of Valley Congressmen David Valadao and Kevin McCarthy. Congressman Devin Nunes also provided critical support for securing this crucial funding source for the U.S. citrus industry.

The funds are a part of the 2014 Fiscal Year Omnibus Spending bill passed by the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, which will be voted on by the House and the U.S. Senate.

"California citrus is a $2 billion industry and creates over 20,000 jobs," said CCM President Joel Nelsen. "Our local congressmen recognize the importance of this industry to the state of California as well as to the U.S. economy."

HLB is a deadly citrus plant disease that is transmitted by a small, aphid-like insect called the Asian citrus psyllid. The disease has devastated citrus industries around the world, including Florida, where it has cost growers $4.6 billion and resulted in the loss of about 8,000 jobs.

Although the disease has only been detected once in California, in a backyard citrus tree in Hacienda Heights in March 2012, the Asian citrus psyllid is now endemic in Southern California and has slowly spread into commercial producing areas as far north as Fresno County. California citrus growers have spared no expense in order to protect the industry by employing an intensive trapping and treatment program to stop the Asian citrus psyllid and prevent HLB from taking hold.

"HLB is a death sentence for all U.S. citrus," said Nelsen. "California citrus growers have spent in excess of $70 million over the course of four years to protect the industry from this devastating disease. This $20 million appropriation demonstrates that this issue is of high priority for the Appropriations Committee and members of Congress."

In December the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the formation of a multi-agency task force to coordinate HLB research, share information, and develop strategies to increase effectiveness. To jumpstart the initiative, USDA provided $1 million to be used in support of long- and short-term research projects.

On Thursday, January 23, Congressman Valadao and USDA-APHIS Deputy Director Osama El-Lissy held a joint hearing in Visalia to address industry questions about this task force and other efforts by USDA to protect U.S. citrus.

"This is not just an industry issue or statewide issue," continued Nelsen. "It is encouraging that our local congressmen and USDA recognize that this is an issue of national concern and are proactively working with citrus industries across the country to identify a solution."

California Citrus Mutual is a non-profit trade association of citrus growers, with approximately 2,200 members representing 70% of California's 285,000-acre, $2 billion citrus industry. The mission of California Citrus Mutual is to inform, educate and advocate on behalf of citrus growers. The Exeter-based organization was founded in 1977.

Ecosystems

Continued from p. 1

at the public meetings, was about the plan's effects on fishing in the local parks. Boiano described most of the lakes and ponds in the plan as "really remote" and "historically fishless."

"Thirty-five years from now, there will still be 462 lakes and ponds with fish," he said. "We feel the proportion is a balanced approach."

The local national parks currently have two main types of non-native trout: eastern brook trout, which are not native to western North America; and rainbow trout, which are native to the region but brought into the park.

"Fishing was a big sport," explained local historian Terry Ommen about why the trout was brought to the area starting in the 1870s. "They never did it for the food."

"The first planting of fish of any kind done in Tulare County was about 25 years ago, when a planting of white fish and eastern catfish was made in the waters of Tulare Lake," wrote George W. Stewart, president of the Tulare County Fish and Game League, in an October 11, 1904 letter to the Bureau of Fisheries in Washington, D.C.

"The first planting done in the mountains was by a few persons carrying rainbow trout from the Big and Little Kern and their tributaries, in cans, to the streams and lakes on the western slopes of the mountains," Stewart continued. "Later, clubs were organized and assisted in the work, and in recent years the state fish commissioners have supplied many thousand small fish for planting in the barren or not well-stocked streams. Among these clubs have been the Visalia Sportsman Club, the Visalia Game Club, the Eshom Valley Fish and Rifle Club, a club at Porterville, and lately the Tulare County Fish and Game League, and the Fish and Game Protective Association, of which there are branches at Visalia, Porterville, Three Rivers and near Kings River."

Golden rainbow trout

"Mules were used to bring fish up into the high country," said Boiano. "In the 1940s, airplanes were used to drop water and fish into lakes."

Stewart's letter, which goes into great detail about when, where and by whom fish were brought into the area, describes the trout as "prolific" – which is part of the problem. Starting in the 1970s, studies showed that the prolific trout was thriving at the expense of the original wildlife, such as birds, snakes, frogs and mammals, which fed by the mountain lakes.

"We stopped stocking (trout) in 1988," Boiano said. "We started doing fish removal in 2001 because we have to follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NIPA)."

He explained that if any program that uses federal funds to do work is shown to have an effect on the environment, it has to go through the NIPA process to analyze those effects. Non-native trout was affecting the local ecosystems.

An environmental assessment about restoring the endangered mountain yellow frog population to the area was conducted in 2001. The original idea was to use gill nets and electrofishing to remove non-native trout from some park lakes and ponds. It was determined, however, that some of the lakes were too large to effectively remove trout with gill nets or electrofishing. The only other option is piscicide, according to Boiano.

Although the plan is still not formally approved, and the final environmental impact report is still in the works, trout have already been removed from some lakes and ponds on the local parks.

"We've been successful in removing fish from 15 lakes," Boiano said, adding that fish removal is currently being conducted in an additional 11 lakes and ponds. "We've shown a huge increase in the native ecosystem. It shows us that it's worth doing this work.

"Most species came back within one year," he added. "Some came back in two to three years. That's what science shows – 70-75% of the species come back in one year and within three years, 95-100% of the native species are back in the ecosystem."

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Ridge Creek General Manager Named Golf Professional of the Year

STAFF REPORTS

Joseph Wisocki IV, KemperSports general manager at Ridge Creek Dinuba, was named Golf Professional of the Year by the San Joaquin Valley Chapter of the Northern California Professional Golfers Association. The San Joaquin Valley Chapter consists of more than 100 golf professionals from Visalia to Stockton.

Ridge Creek Golf Club in Dinuba

"It is with great pleasure that the City of Dinuba congratulates Ridge Creek Golf Club General Manager Joe Wisocki on being named the NCPGA San Joaquin Valley Chapter Golf Professional of the Year," said Dinuba City Manager Beth Nunes. "Mr. Wisocki has demonstrated the leadership and ability to grow Ridge Creek Golf Club into the premier golf course that it is today. The city is proud to partner with Mr. Wisocki and KemperSports to continue to offer a high quality course and service to the community of Dinuba."

Joseph Wisocki IV

Ridge Creek Dinuba Golf Club is owned by the City of Dinuba and managed by KemperSports since its inception. Scottsdale, Arizona-based John Fought designed the par 72, upscale daily-fee course, strategically incorporating natural grasses and bunkers to produce a heathland golf experience as found in the classic courses of England. Ridge Creek Dinuba Golf Club also offers a state-of-the-art, 360-degree practice facility and a full service restaurant and bar, Three Finger Jack's, which is open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

KemperSports builds, owns and manages golf courses, resorts, athletic clubs and lodging venues across the U.S., Caribbean and Central America. The company's award-winning portfolio includes nationally-ranked courses and tournament venues such as Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, named the No. 1 Golf Resort in North America by Golf Digest and GOLF magazine; The Glen Club; Bolingbrook Golf Club in Bolingbrook, IL; Desert Willow Golf Resort; Harbor Shores, site of the 2012 and 2014 Senior PGA Championship presented by KitchenAid; and Chambers Bay, host of the 2010 U.S. Amateur and the 2015 U.S. Open. For more information about KemperSports, visit www.kempersports.com.

County Democrats Plan Meet and Greet for New Judge Michael Sheltzer

STAFF REPORTS

The Tulare County Democratic Party will host a meet and greet reception for newly appointed Judge Michael Sheltzer on Sunday, Feb. 23 from 5:30pm to 7:30pm at the Lunch Box, 112 W. Court St, Visalia. The event is open to the public and free.

Sheltzer, of Visalia, was recently appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to serve as Tulare County Superior Court Judge. He has served as the public defender in the Tulare County Public Defender's Office since 2002, where he has held multiple positions since 1990, including assistant public defender, supervising attorney and deputy public defender from 1985 to 1988. He has been an adjunct professor at the San Joaquin College of Law, and served as deputy public defender in San Francisco.

Sheltzer has a law degree from Golden Gate University Law School and a Bachelors of Arts degree from Tulane University.

He fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Glade Roper. Sheltzer is a Democrat.

In attendance will also be local Democratic Candidates running for office this year:

- Felipe A. Martinez TCBOS #5
- Paulina Miranda SD-8 (includes Three Rivers)
- Ruben Macareno AD-26
- Derek Thomas AD-26
- Carlton Jones AD-26
- Suzanne Aguilera-Marrero CD-22
- Virginia Gurrola TCBOS#5
- Amanda Renteria will send surrogate.

For more information, call 559-372-2126.

Diabetic Drugs May Be Dangerous To Your Health

New guide sheds light on the dangers of diabetic drugs and why doctors prescribe them anyway. You could be at risk!

A free guide has just been released that reveals why current therapy may make your condition worse. If you are frustrated that your blood sugars don't budge and continue to rise despite your drugs this guide is a must have. To receive your free guide entitled "Diabetic Ignorance: How Drug Companies, The Food Industry, and some Drs. set you up for Failure" call today 1-559-627-2225 or go to www.visaliadiabetesreport.com Dr. Ruben Garcia, DC

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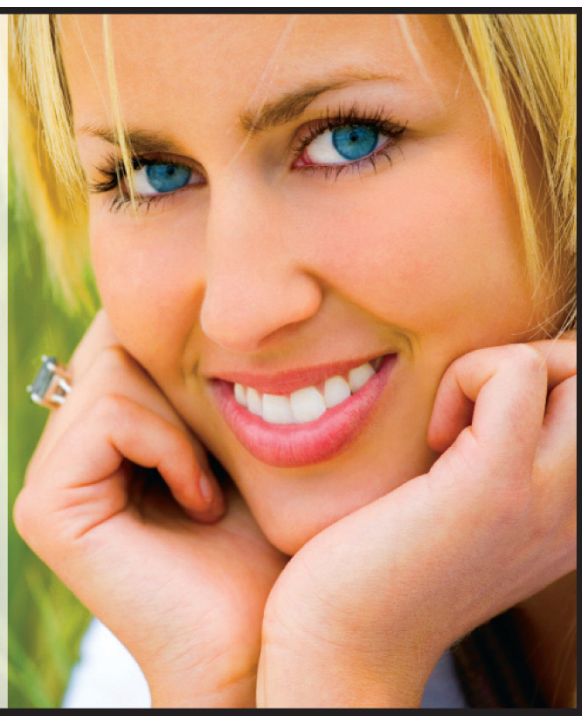

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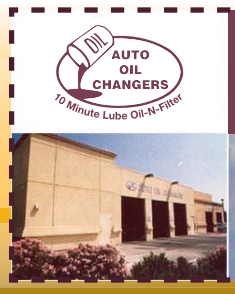

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News in Brief...

CONGRESSMAN NUNES OFFERS INTERNSHIPS

"Internships are available in my Visalia and Washington, D.C., offices," reports Congressman Devin Nunes. "If you know someone who is interested in politics and public affairs, wants to gain professional experience, and can excel in a fast-paced environment, please pass along this message."

Interns provide critical staff support and are often called on to work at public events, conduct research and help with special projects. The application process is always open. For spring internships, candidates must submit their applications immediately; for summer internships, applications must be submitted by March 28. Both part-time and full-time applicants will be considered.

All interns must have a high school diploma. Additionally, they must be enrolled in or have recently graduated from an accredited college or university. Applications can be downloaded from http://nunes.house.gov/constituentservices/internships.htm.

For more information, call 733-3861.

MAJESTIC MOUNTAIN LOOP TOURISM CAMPAIGN WINS 2014 POPPY AWARD

On February 6, the Majestic Mountain Loop tourism campaign was awarded the prestigious 2014 Poppy Award from Visit California for the "Best Regional Collaborative Marketing Program."

A collaborative partnership between the Visalia Convention and Visitors Bureau, Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau, Fresno Yosemite International Airport and Delaware North Parks and Resorts, Majestic Mountain Loop promotes visiting three National Parks--Sequoia, Kings Canyon and Yosemite-- in three days.

The "Loop" introduces the Sequoia, Kings Canyon and Yosemite National parks to travelers who thought they did not have time to see all three, or did not realize how accessible it is to see all three distinct parks.

For more information, visit www.majesticmountainloop.com.

VISALIA MAYOR NELSEN TO SPEAK AT LIBRARY

Mayor Steve Nelsen will give a snapshot of the city – where it stands financially and what issues lie ahead. He will give updates on current projects, including the new animal control facility, the new emergency communication center, the water conservation plant upgrade, and progress on parks throughout the city, including the Lincoln Oval. There will be discussion about the drought and current status of water conservation measures the city council may consider, and how public efforts could make a huge difference in the city's water supply.

This is the second program in the "Getting to Know" series at the Tulare County Library, which is designed to give the people of Visalia and surrounding areas an opportunity to get to know the people and issues affecting them. These programs are free to the public and all are welcome to attend. For more information, call 713-2703 or visit www.tularecountylibrary.org.

VISALIA VICE MAYOR GUBLER TO HOST 'DONUTS AND DISCUSSION'

Visalia Vice Mayor Warren Gubler and Public Works Director Adam Ennis will host "Donuts and Discussion" from 7-8:30am on Saturday, February 22, at Panera Bread, 4103 S. Mooney Blvd.

This informal gathering allows citizens to present their concerns or ask questions one-on-one with Gubler. Ennis will provide an update on the city's largest public works project, the upgrade of its water conservation plant, and give information on street upgrades and upcoming events in the city. Drop-ins are welcome at any time. Gubler also can be reached at 713-4400, ext. 3313, or wgubler@ci.visalia.ca.us.

RECONSIDERING THE MOST GODLESS CITIES IN AMERICA

Our last News In Brief column reported on the American Bible Society study that ranked the "Bible-mindedness" of 100 American cities, and placed Fresno/Visalia at No. 70 on the list. The study, which was based on how often respondents read the Bible and how accurate they believe it to be, found Providence, Rhode Island, and Bedford, Massachusetts, to be the two least "Bible-minded" cities in America.

A new study conducted by BibleGateway.com, based on how often its Bible-searching software is used in cities, ranks Fresno/Visalia at No. 79. Unlike the ABS study, however, the newer study doesn't take into account how accurate people in each city consider the Bible to be.

COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD SEEKS CANDIDATES

The Tulare County Library Advisory Board is seeking candidates to fill vacancies from Supervisor Districts Four and Five. The board meets once a month and advises the county librarian on library issues important to their district. The board also advises and makes recommendations to the board of supervisors regarding all phases of library services and operations of the Tulare County Library System.

The Fourth District covers the northwest portion of Tulare County, and includes communities such as Dinuba, Cutler-Orosi, Woodlake, Ivanhoe, Goshen and a portion of Visalia. District Five includes Porterville, Springville, Terra Bella, Alpine, Ducor, Camp

Nelson, California Hot Springs, Posey, Kennedy Meadows, Ponderosa, Sequoia Crest and surrounding areas of southeast Tulare County.

Board members receive reimbursement for actual and necessary travel expenses within the county in connection with their duties. For an application form or additional information, contact the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors' Office at 636-5000. The application form is also available on the Tulare County website.

NOMINATION PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR STATE, COUNTY AND FEDERAL OFFICES

The Tulare County Registrar of Voters, Rita A. Woodard, announced that nomination papers for offices to be voted on during the June 3 Primary Election are available through Friday, March 7, in the Elections Division, Government Plaza, 5951 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia.

For further information regarding filing for an elective office, call 624-7300. For information on nomination papers that have been filed, visit www.tularecounty.ca.gov/registrarofvoters.

HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION CHANGES NAME

The Home Builders Association's board of directors recently voted to change its name back to the organization's original title, the Building Industry Association (BIA) of Tulare/Kings Counties. In 2006, the name was changed due to the influence of the state residential housing market and other BIAs across the state, which were rebranding their associations.

President/CEO Bob Keenan said that the BIA name better defines the organization, what it does and who it represents in these two counties. "The BIA actively supports all local commercial and industrial economic development and job creation, as well as ensuring that there is safe, clean and energy-efficient housing affordable for all economic income levels."

The association works with the cities and both counties on their General Plan Updates, Climate Action Plans, Regional Transportation Plans, Sustainable Community Strategies, future infrastructure needs and Development Impact and School Fees to help pay the costs.

The BIA was formally incorporated as a non-profit organization in May of 1989 by several local industry leaders and developers as an organization that would promote, protect and defend the local economies and the affordability of the housing markets.

For more information, visit www.biatkc.com.

AT&T 4G LTE EXPANDS IN SOUTH VALLEY

AT&T has expanded its 4G LTE network to Hanford, bringing more customers the latest generation of its wireless network technology. AT&T launched 4G LTE in Visalia-Porterville in June 2013, and the expanded coverage in Hanford is part of its ongoing rollout across the market.

This expansion is part of AT&T's Velocity IP (VIP) Plan, a three-year investment plan announced in Fall 2012 to expand and enhance its IP broadband networks. Through this investment, AT&T is supporting its customers' growing desire for high-speed Internet access and new mobile, app and cloud-based services. As part of VIP, AT&T plans to add macro cell sites nationwide by year-end 2015, as well as deploy small cells and add Distributed Antenna Systems to increase the density of its wireless network.

PORTERVILLE COLLEGE PROGRAM SEEKS PARTNERS

The Porterville College CalWORKs Work Study program provides students with on- and off-campus work opportunities to develop and strengthen workplace skills while completing their educational goals. With the assistance of dedicated on- and off-campus employers, students learn how to enter and/or re-enter the workforce with the confidence that is needed to achieve career satisfaction and economic self-sufficiency. Work-Study is a time-limited program that allows students to earn money while working up to 19 hours a week while obtaining their degree or certificates.

The PC Work-Study program offers two options for participating employers: first is the option that the program covers 100% of the student's wages at no cost to the employer; second is the option that the employer, and the program, share the cost of employment equally. Some employers take advantage of this option for tax credit purposes, and it also benefits the program to be able to employ more students.

PC has several employers who have joined the CalWORKs Work Study program, including: Port Naz Christian Academy, Dr. Andrea Espinosa, Hanson Travel Agency, O La Raza, Dr. Ramu Thiagarajan MD, Porterville Chamber of Commerce, Porterville Superior Court, Porterville Unified School District, Hoops Preschool, Porterville Adult Day Services and Turner and Associates Insurance Company.

Currently, Porterville College has 13 students employed throughout the community. Four students have finished the program and were hired as full-time employees through the business they worked for.

PC is looking for new community business partners. If you own a local business and would be interested in participating in the Porterville College CalWORKs Work Study program, call 791-2303. For more information visit www.portervillecollege.edu/student-services/CalWORKs.

VISALIA MEDICAL CLINIC PHYSICIANS EARN CERTIFICATION

Visalia Medical Clinic's ear, nose and throat specialist Craig Calloway, MD, FACS, and surgeon Ammon Rasmussen, MD, recently earned board certification in their respective specialties.

Dr. Calloway is now certified by the American Board of Sleep Medicine, in addition to certification by the American Board of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery. Dr. Calloway provides diagnosis and treatment through The Sleep Disorders Center at Visalia Medical Clinic.

Dr. Rasmussen completed his written and oral exam and earned certification by the American Board of Surgery. He joined VMC in the summer of 2013 after completing his residency at Ohio State.

VALLEY COMMERCE BANCORP REPORTS RECORD EARNINGS

Valley Commerce Bancorp, the parent company of Valley Business Bank, announced unaudited fourth-quarter 2013 net income of $775,000 or $0.27 per diluted share. This compared to earnings of $642,000, or $0.23 per diluted share, for the fourth quarter of 2012. For the year ended December 31, 2013, the company reported unaudited net income of $4.1 million, or $1.43 per diluted share. This compared to earnings of $3.2 million, or $1.12 per diluted share, for the year ended December 31, 2012.

Allan W. Stone, president and CEO, remarked, "It is once again my privilege to report the company's annual earnings. With net income of $4.1 million, 2013 is our third straight year of record earnings."

Your Relationship Road Map – Part 1

KAY PACKARD

You can deepen your understanding of your own and someone else's essential love style by reading one line in the hand—the Heart Line. Relationships consume the majority of our waking life, and we have hundreds of opportunities every day to connect with other people. We relate with our mates, children, parents, grandparents, siblings, co-workers, subordinates, bosses, business partners and more. Our best relationship starts with ourselves. The little knowledge you glean from this etching can pick up, perk up and improve your daily interactions. You can think of it as your relationship roadmap.

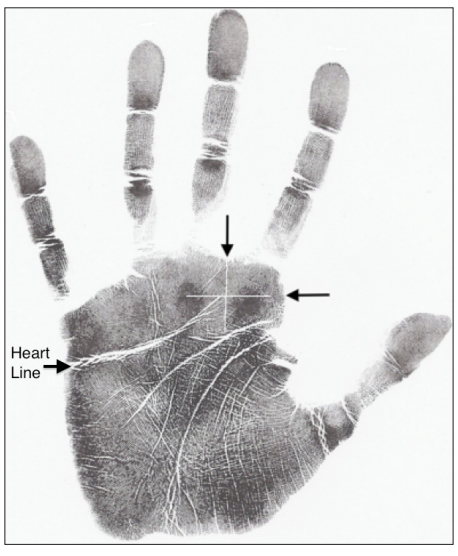

Fig. 1 The Sections of the Heart Line Quadrant

When you know more about your love style, you can better clarify and ask for what you would like to have in your relationship. Then you're more likely to get your needs met. And when you nurture yourself, and your needs are met, you can connect with others more deeply and completely. When you connect more deeply and completely, you can appreciate others in a more loving and compassionate way.

Let's take a quick look at the four basic, easy-to-read Heart Line types: The Passionate, Big Heart, Hermit and Rational Romantic. Each illustrates a style of emotional behavior that is typically displayed to others. How you like to be treated in relationship and how you like to treat others can be read in the Heart Line.

Four Steps to Analyzing the Heart Line

1. Locate the Heart Line carved in your hands.
2. Starting on the outside edge of the palm, follow the line and note in which section of the imaginary quadrant your Heart Line ends.
3. Read the associated descriptions, including both upside and downside possibilities.

Heart Line Styles

Identification: The Heart Line starts on the outer edge of the palm under the pinkie finger and runs horizontally across the hand. The line may be straight or curved and long or short. It usually ends somewhere beneath the middle or index finger. Any Heart Line style is possible on a hand. You may also find a different Heart Line on each hand. The type of Heart Line is independent of culture, gender or sexual preference.

The description of your style in relationship is determined by the termination point(s) of your Heart Line. When looking at the map of your Heart Line, you want to find where the widest part of the river ends. Sometimes the line will thin out, near the end, like a river turning into a stream. To be most precise with your reading, find where the thickest part of the Heart Line ends.

You will want to employ this method on both your right and left hand. Empirical evidence shows that the Heart Line on the right hand demonstrates the emotional characteristics displayed to the world and the left hand most often shows the traits used at home and in the inner, more intimate world.

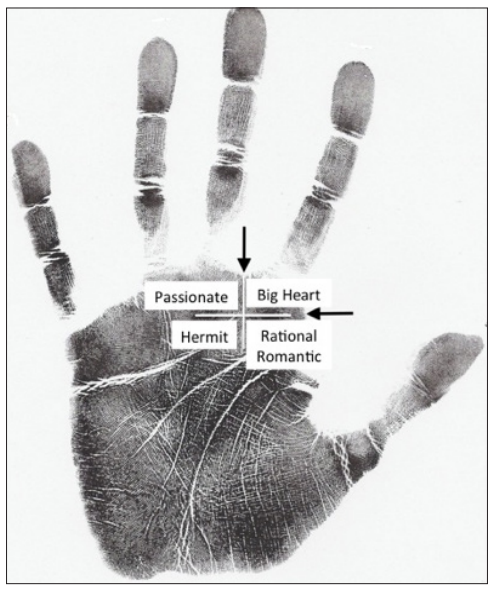

Fig. 2 Names assigned depending on Termination Point of the Heart Line

The Heart Line Quadrant

The imaginary quadrant has four sections under the middle and index fingers. See figure 1 to position the quadrant, on one hand at a time. First draw an imaginary line straight down between the index and middle finger. Decide if the Heart Line ends on the index or the middle finger side of the vertical line. Next draw an imaginary horizontal line across the vertical line about half an inch from base of fingers. Now, determine if your Heart Line ends above or below that imaginary horizontal line. Then look to see in which section of the quadrant your Heart Line terminates on both hands.

Fig. 3 The Hermit Heart Line

Names are assigned to the Heart Line type depending on which quadrant the Heart Line ends. These names are assigned to illustrate emotional behaviors found in owners of these lines. As an example, the Heart Line in figure 1 is short, flat and ending below the middle finger in the lower left section of the quadrant. This Heart Line is considered the Hermit Heart.

Are you a Hermit? Let's explore one of the four main Heart Line types, the Hermit.

The Hermit

The short and straight Heart Line belongs to the Hermit. It ends below the middle finger (lower horizontal arrow in figure 3) in the lower right section of the quadrant. (The upper arrow is pointing to another line that looks like it could be a Heart Line but it is not; these lines are not connected.)

If you are the Hermit, you are the lone settler. This doesn't mean you will be alone or want to go through life solo. It does mean you require sanctuary time. The Hermit certainly has emotions, but you display them less than those with curvy Heart Lines. You need time to marinate in your feelings before responding. You like loyal, solid and dependable relationships where you have a strong sense of freedom – in fact, freedom is non-negotiable to you. Your nature is to be productive and grounded. Privacy, security and work are high priorities. You show your love by doing for others. You might not ask others "How are you feeling?" because you believe actions speak louder than words. You simply witness how people are doing without becoming entangled in uncomfortable emotional scenarios. When faced with uncomfortable displays of emotion you'd like to slither away and withdraw. Your biggest challenge is to tune into your heart and communicate your feelings at the appropriate time of your own volition.

At your best, you are dedicated to projects and loyal to very few people and to your pets.

Affirmation: I am keeping my heart open to mysterious feelings and practicing the art of communication in my relationships.

Stay tuned for the next Heart Line types, including The Passionate! Ohh, la la.

This article is an excerpt from Kay's upcoming book, Your Life is in Your Hands. *Kay holds a Master of Arts degree in Spiritual Psychology and teaches people the art and science of Hand Analysis. For more information, visit KayPackard.com.*

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Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

AND FINALLY – THE UNBELIEVABLE

Everyone's favorite candidate for governor, Tim Donnelly, apparently is on probation. Mr. Donnelly, R-San Bernardino County, was placed on probation for three years after trying to board a plane with a loaded handgun at the Ontario International Airport in 2012.

The maximum penalty for his crime was 18 months in jail. Donnelly pleaded no contest and was fined $2,215 and placed on probation until 2015, meaning he would still be on probation if elected governor.

According to a February 14th article in the *Los Angeles Times*, Mr. Donnelly has violated his probation. "Donnelly used two borrowed handguns and a rifle while practicing shooting on a campaign stop in Santa Cruz County." The personal use of firearms not registered to him was in violation of his probation. Just as surprising as Mr. Donnelly's offense is the fact that there is a firing range in Santa Cruz.

The *L.A. Times* continued, "Asked in a phone interview whether he violated his probation, Donnelly said, 'I don't see it,' and called the questions 'much ado about nothing. I didn't do anything other than exercise my 2nd Amendment rights as a free American,' he said."

Besides the fact that his views on gun control are more in step with Oklahoma than California, his comments make it look like he is above the law. Does Mr. Donnelly mean to say only the laws he agrees with pertain to him?

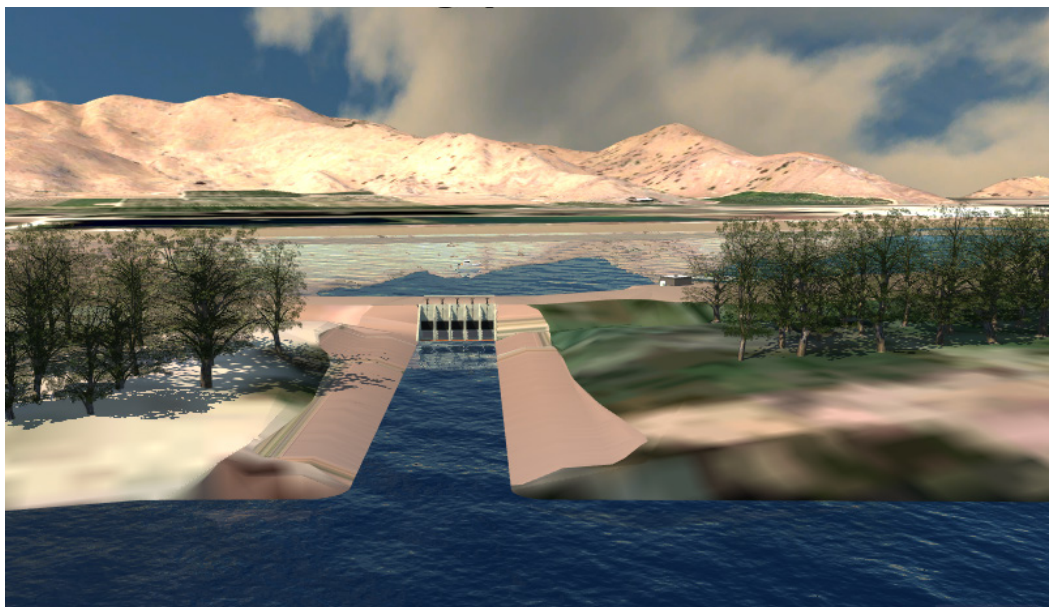
You'd think someone on probation running for public office would be a little more apologetic, maybe even humble, especially if that person were running for governor.

New Water Storage and Management Option Proposed

STAFF REPORTS

A new reservoir is proposed at McKay Point, near Lemon Cove and Woodlake, to provide new water storage, flood control and potential power generation. The project is a joint venture of property owners Tulare Irrigation District, the Consolidated Peoples Ditch Company and the Visalia & Kaweah Water Company.

CEMEX, an aggregates and building materials company with long-established local operations, will excavate the reservoir site and sell the materials. The owners will then receive a royalty on the sale of materials, which provides revenue that should make the project financially feasible, explained Paul Hendrix, general manager of the Tulare Irrigation District.



Kaweah Inlet Structure - Looking up inlet channel

A series of public hearings this month have enabled Tulare Irrigation District to gather public input on elements that residents feel need to be considered in the Environmental Impact Report. Public comments must be submitted by Feb. 27.

The key components of the project are:

- More efficient capture and distribution of water for ag use. The new reservoir, and its water control features, will allow for water to be captured and more efficiently distributed for agricultural use, when farmers need it. Currently, during times of flood release from Terminus Dam, water not immediately needed is diverted to groundwater recharge basins or discharged to the historic Tulare Lake Bed. The reservoir will allow for increased upstream storage of this water.
- Flood control. During wet years, water will be diverted into the reservoir, thereby lessening the risk of water backing up into the streets of downtown Visalia. Water would be returned to the Lower Kaweah and the St. Johns rivers when it is safe and beneficial to do so.
- Power generation. The hydroelectric generators at the Terminus Dam outlets at Lake Kaweah will be able to produce more power, especially during times of peak demand, once the McKay Point reservoir is available. The resulting clean power may provide revenue to support the maintenance of the reservoir and other projects as needed to ensure continued delivery of water to support agriculture.
- More water for local use. During wet years, water from the Kaweah River, Dry Creek and Yokohl Creek typically floods farmland and/or is diverted to the Friant-Kern Canal for disposal in the Kern River near Bakersfield (assuming the Kern River has capacity). The McKay Point Reservoir will capture some of this floodwater and hold it until it can be safely released back into the Kaweah and St. Johns rivers for immediate use or for groundwater recharge.

"The reservoir and its new water control structures will significantly improve how we capture, store and distribute water," Hendrix noted. "The partnership with CEMEX is necessary in order for the owners to deliver an important service to the region at virtually no cost to the general public."

The reservoir itself, to be located north of the separation of the Kaweah and St. Johns rivers, is expected to take about 120 acres of the jointly owned 500 acres.

"McKay Point meets a real need," Hendrix added. "It is an excellent example of responsible and resourceful management of energy and water. In this increasingly water-short region, finding new ways to make good use of wet-year water and flood flows is critically important."

For information on the McKay Point Reservoir project, visit www.mckaypoint.com or contact Paul Hendrix or Aaron Fukuda, Tulare Irrigation District, 686-3425; James Silva, Consolidated Peoples Ditch Co., 747-1177; or Richard Moss, Provost & Pritchard, 636-1166.

Worthley

Continued from p. 1

built up confidence in me. They know me. I'm not an unknown person; I'm very open, very direct. Sometimes people don't like my positions, but they know my positions early on. There are no surprises."

But it did come as a surprise to learn that, despite continuing difficult times, the county would, for instance, opt to spend upward of $185 per cat in an effort to eradicate cats in Mooney Grove. Worthley does not accept the premise that cats belong in the park, citing compatibility and health issues. At least twice, the fire department's installation there has had to be closed and sprayed for fleas. Additionally, the carpet in the museum has had to be replaced for the same reason.

> *"HSR (High-Speed Rail) has very little impact on Tulare County. A little tiny piece of it might go through Tulare County down around Allensworth. There is talk of perhaps having a station between Visalia and Hanford. But I'm skeptical. I've been skeptical of the HSR from the very beginning."*
>
> — *Steve Worthley*

"Here's where I come down," Worthley said. "Why do we have a park? Do we have a park for homeless cats, or do we have a park for people? My position is, we have a park for people and not cats. Cats should not be at the park, period."

Yet cats are not Mooney Grove's only concern. Peacocks are problematic. And now Canadian geese, once migratory, have made a permanent home there. "They come and they stay and have babies, and they're very protective of their babies. And they crap all over the park." Worthley sees it as the county's job to manage these populations so that they don't interfere with people's enjoyment of the park.

The current drought, along with the emerging psyllid crisis, are also things to be managed. Worthley sits on the Upper Kings River Authority. "This may be the driest winter in 500 years," he said. "We've got to get a hold of the issue of our watershed." Past consequences of the drought, such as the culling of cattle and crops, Worthley is chiefly concerned with the recharging of ground water. Because cities rely so heavily on pumping, he sees the creation of more recharging basins as essential. "There have been water bonds over the years, but none have actually brought water to the public." There is even a small recharching basin in Mooney Grove.

> *"I know a great place to get rid of your cat. They'll feed it, neuter it, they'll take care of it and it's just down the street here. How do those cats get there in the first place?"*
>
> — *Steve Worthley*

Worthley sees the county, and the region in general, as both more proactive and reactive than Florida has been when contending with the psyllid, an insect known to be a carrier of the fatal citrus greening disease. "We have a citrus belt because of the Friant Kern Canal. There was no water before that. It was all grazing land. Especially on the west side, some trees may die. Some land may be fallowed." But at present, Worthley says, while we cannot grant ourselves more rain, we can combat the psyllid. "Currently, there is a joint effort by growers, the state of California, county and feds. The goal at this point is eradication."

Worthley is optimistic about the future. "I'm very enthusiastic about the county. I get all these news clippings and I see what's going on in the rest of the state." He further believes it is key for Tulare County to manage its infrastructure, with road construction as a main factor in attracting business. Sitting on the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) has given Worthley further reason for enthusiasm. TCAG's primary responsibility, the distribution of transportation dollars, has during his tenure greatly been augmented by matching funds by such sources as CalTrans.

"My hope is that in my position and my longevity I'll be a catalyst to keep improvements going."

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Awareness and Vigilance Key to Ending Human Trafficking in Tulare County

TIM WARD

Human trafficking. It's a term most people associate with a distant country, but the unfortunate reality is that this form of modern day slavery is happening right here in our community. As your district attorney, I want to raise awareness of this "hidden" crime.

Not to be confused with human smuggling – a form of illegal migration involving the transport of a person across an international border, usually in exchange for money – human trafficking is the use of force, fraud or coercion to exploit someone for labor or commercial sex. (If the victims are minors, the elements of force, fraud or coercion don't have to exist.)

Every day all over America, men, women and children are being trafficked. In fact, trafficking in persons is now second only to drugs as a means of income for criminal street gangs. And while California is among the top three states in the nation for human trafficking, it often goes unnoticed. When people witness a robbery or shooting, they recognize it as a crime and call 911. But human trafficking plays out quietly right under our noses, in a few typical scenarios.

In a classic labor trafficking case, a young man from another country is promised a job in California. He is told he'll make $8 an hour in construction, work a 40-hour workweek, and be placed in housing. Instead, upon his arrival, his passport and ID are seized. He is forced to work 12 hours a day, seven days a week. His housing consists of a one-room shack, where he sleeps with six other men, also being exploited, on thin mattresses on the floor. His traffickers withhold wages, claiming he owes them for the cost of bringing him to America. He earns the equivalent of $3 an hour, sending what he doesn't spend on food and necessities back to his family in his home country. He is told that if he tells anyone, his family will be killed.

Teenage girls are frequent targets in typical sex trafficking cases. These girls are often at-risk, already victims of sexual or physical abuse, or perhaps runaways. Adept at singling out a vulnerable girl, the trafficker tells her what she longs to hear – that he'll be her boyfriend, show her what it's like to be treated right. She'll jump into the relationship and, at first, will experience everything he promises. He'll buy her clothes, makeup and jewelry. But after a few weeks, he'll tell her he needs her to do something for him: he wants her to have sex with other men for money. She reluctantly complies, wanting to assure him that she loves him. After a few nights of selling herself, she wants to quit. When she tells her trafficker she is leaving, he brutally beats her. He tells her that if she leaves, he'll post the nude pictures he's taken of her on Facebook. And he'll beat her up again if she doesn't continue selling herself.

If this sounds like something that doesn't happen here, think again. There have been two recent cases of sex trafficking in Tulare County. In both cases, the traffickers were men who recruited teenagers to perform sex acts. Both have pled guilty. But we know that more human trafficking exists in our backyard, and we need to do two things to uncover these cases.

The first is to encourage training for law enforcement. In light of this, my office is partnering with Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux to ensure that local law enforcement officers recognize human trafficking when they encounter it. We are in talks to provide training that we hope officers from every law enforcement agency in Tulare County will attend.

The second is public education. Armed with knowledge of human trafficking, our citizens can more easily recognize and report it. My office recently convened a human trafficking committee, with a focus on raising awareness of this crime. A public service announcement campaign, including radio and print ads, has run throughout the month of January.

Everyone can his or her part. Keep your eyes open for signs of human trafficking, and if you suspect it's occurring, don't be afraid to get involved. Call your local law enforcement agency, or the national hotline at 1-888-3737-888. Be a hero to someone who is too frightened to speak out. Working together, we can eliminate this horrible crime in our community.

To learn more about human trafficking, call our Victim Witness Assistance Division at 636-5471, or visit www.polarisproject.org.

Tim Ward is the District Attorney of Tulare County.

Black Tie

ALEX OLDENBOURG

Assembly Republicans Introduce Plan to Create 108,000 Jobs

STAFF REPORTS

Reaffirming their pledge to put California Jobs First, Assembly Republicans announced a proposal to invest in local transportation infrastructure projects and create up to 108,000 new jobs statewide.

"Californians are fed up with the broken promises of high-speed rail and they should have the final say on its future," said Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway, of Tulare. "Our proposal would ask the people to decide whether high-speed rail dollars should be used to build or repair roads, highways, bridges and ports, and create 108,000 jobs from Red Bluff to San Diego – or whether we should continue to throw money at the 'Little Engine That Could.'"

The Assembly Republican plan would dedicate $11 billion in one-time funds and $2.4 billion annually for statewide transportation infrastructure projects. It is estimated that the GOP plan would create up to 108,000 jobs statewide and grow the economy by $140 billion.

In a 2011 report, the California Transportation Commission highlighted $295 billion in unmet transportation infrastructure needs throughout the state, including $9.7 billion in the Central Valley.

The Assembly Republican proposal would generate both short- and long-term funding to jumpstart these hundreds of backlogged projects across the state and create local jobs in these communities.

"For too long, Sacramento has underfunded California's vital transportation infrastructure needs, resulting in millions of drivers stuck in traffic jams instead of spending quality time with their families," said Assembly Transportation Committee Vice Chair Eric Linder, R-Corona. "By investing in local transportation projects, we can boost the economy, create jobs throughout the state, reduce traffic congestion, and improve air quality."

Specifically, it would repay $2.5 billion in transportation dollars seized by the state during tough budget times (one-time funds). It would also end budget gimmicks by dedicating gas tax dollars to state and local transportation projects ($2.4 billion in ongoing, annual funds).

Assembly Republicans also want to ask voters to revote on the high-speed rail bond and rededicate $8.5 billion to state and local transportation projects (one-time funds). When the high-speed rail bond passed, voters were falsely promised that taxpayers would only be responsible for one-third of the project costs. Yet costs continue to skyrocket past original estimates and promises of funding from private investors and the federal government are uncertain at best. GOP lawmakers said that it's time to go to the people again to see if these dollars are better spent on other transportation infrastructure needs.

Kaweah Delta Saves District Property Owners $6.3 Million

STAFF REPORTS

Kaweah Delta Health Care District refinanced its 2004 general obligation bonds on January 30, saving district property owners approximately $6.3 million over the next 20 years.

The move followed unanimous support of a resolution approved by the Kaweah Delta Health Care District Board of Directors during its January 6 board meeting. By leveraging Kaweah Delta's solid credit rating and taking advantage of low interest rates, property owners within the district will benefit from a reduction of approximately $303,000 annually through 2034.

Kaweah Delta issued and sold the refinancing bonds to Compass Mortgage Company and WAB Investments, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Western Alliance Bank, at an average rate of 4 percent.

The $51 million general obligation bonds stem from the 2003 passage of Measure M, which helped Kaweah Delta raise the $143 million needed to build the Acequia Wing. The 220,000-square-foot, six-story tower was completed on time and on budget in 2009. It increased and improved Kaweah Delta's delivery of three key acute care services – cardiac, emergency and maternity care – and added 87 beds to the district's downtown medical center. The tower houses an expanded emergency department and trauma center, an expanded area for newborns and new moms to receive care, a new cardiovascular intensive care unit, and a state-of-the-art facility to provide cardiac and vascular surgery for patients. Local residents voted in favor of the bond that is now being repaid through property tax assessments.

Established in 1963, Kaweah Delta Health Care District is the only level III trauma center serving Tulare and Kings counties. The district offers a comprehensive scope of services including everything from a well-respected pediatric hospitalist program to nationally recognized orthopedic and cancer programs.

For more information, visit www.kaweahdelta.org or follow Kaweah Delta on Twitter and Facebook.

Tulare Students Make Donation to Oseola McCarty Scholarship

VAN ARNOLD

Matthew Johnson encourages his sixth-grade students to be "lifelong givers." Looks like his class is off to an impressive start.

The students, who attend Alice G. Mulcahy Middle School in Tulare, were inspired by the story of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, washerwoman Oseola McCarty, who left the vast majority of her life savings to the University of Southern Mississippi for the establishment of a perpetual scholarship.

The class' decision to donate a $40 cash prize – won as part of a school-wide fundraising effort – to the McCarty Scholarship Fund prompted contributions from others within the school. The result was a check for $135 sent to Southern Miss earmarked for the McCarty Scholarship.

"Well, inspiration has a way of being contagious," said Johnson. "First, I was inspired by my students' desire to give. Then, my principal and our school librarian decided to give. That, in turn, compelled me to want to give more than I had originally pledged to give."

Johnson's class of 35 students learned about McCarty's generosity in December from a reading anthology that included her biography. "They were simply amazed by her story, and they wanted to know more about the scholarship fund," said Johnson.

In 1995, it was announced that McCarty, who never attended college, intended to leave approximately $150,000 of her savings to Southern Miss. The money would provide scholarships to students who could not otherwise afford a college education. Today, the market value of the Oseola McCarty Endowed Scholarship Fund totals nearly $745,000.

Members of Matthew Johnson's sixth-grade class show off Southern Miss memorabilia outside their school in Tulare.

Forty-four students have received McCarty Scholarships with more than $370,000 awarded since the scholarship's inception. There is a residence hall on the Hattiesburg campus of Southern Miss named for McCarty, who died in 1999. The USM Foundation also renamed its planned giving society the McCarty Legacy in honor of its most well-known planned gift benefactor.

Shannon Fleming, executive director of the USM Foundation, noted the significance of the gift from almost 20 years ago and the recent one.

"When Ms. McCarty's planned gift was announced in 1995, it literally made international news," said Fleming. "It was an incredible story of generosity, and I am heartened by the fact that almost two decades later, these young students located all the way across the country were inspired by that story to become donors themselves. What could be more inspiring?"

In response to their impressive gesture, the students received a packet of Southern Miss memorabilia. The term "paying it forward" has seldom resonated so clearly with a group of elementary school youngsters. Johnson shared that one of his students made the comment: "You have really inspired us to tell others about the Oseola McCarty Scholarship."

Johnson noted that during the school year he teaches the class five root words per week. Just before the recent holiday break the students learned about "phil" – the Greek root meaning "brotherly love."

"I didn't really need to reteach them the word they had learned four months earlier – philanthropist," said Johnson. "They had become philanthropists in their own right."

Johnson knows his students could not have taken their cue from a better role model. "Oseola McCarty continues to give to us all," he said.

To learn more about the Oseola McCarty Scholarship Fund, contact the USM Foundation at 601-266-5210 or visit www.usmfoundation.com.

Article courtesy of Southern Miss Office of Communications.

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Black History Committee Plans Harlem Renaissance Celebration

AMBIKA MATHIS

"Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me."

This famous quote by folklorist and writer Zora Neale Hurston gives us a glimpse into the period in time that inspired her works. The Harlem Renaissance (c. 1918–1935) was a blossoming of African American creative arts associated with the larger New Negro movement, a concept of cultural pluralism inspiring notions of the United States as the first "transnational" nation, in which diverse heritages should develop side-by-side in harmony rather than be "melted" together or ranked on a scale of evolving "civilization."

W.E.B. Du Bois, the dominant black intellectual of the day, already advocated a position similar to this in his famous book, The Souls of Black Folk (1903), a defining text of the New Negro movement, fueled primarily by a need for American intellectuals to define "American" culture distinct from that of Europe's.

Social foundations of the movement included the Great Migration of African Americans from rural to urban spaces and from South to the North, dramatically rising levels of literacy. National organizations developed at this time that were dedicated to pressing African American civil rights (NAACP), "uplifting" the race and opening up socio-economic opportunities (National Urban

Continued on p. 24 »

Audra McDonald to Headline Visalia's L.J. Williams Theater

With a record-tying five Tony Awards, two Grammy Awards, and a long list of other accolades to her name, Audra McDonald is among today's most highly regarded performers, and she's coming to Visalia's L.J. Williams Theater.

Audra McDonald

Her February 28th concert is a benefit for Hands in the Community – a non-profit organization based in Visalia that provides a variety of services in Tulare and Kings counties. It acts as a network to connect services and resources between those in need and those who can provide a solution.

"There is no charge for our services thanks to the volunteers and 140-plus businesses who have donated over $2 million back into the community," said HITC Executive Director Lester Moon.

The organization has presented a handful of similar events over the past few years, with the most recent being in January 2013 with Pentatonix, of which Visalian Avi Kaplan is a member. For this 2014 fundraising concert, HITC was hopeful to land another Central Valley-native and was very pleased at the booking of McDonald by Rainmaker Productions – a Visalia-based promotion company. McDonald grew up in Fresno, graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School, and continued on to graduate from Julliard in 1993.

As usual for HITC, this concert will include performances from Visalia Unified High School students. "I am constantly amazed at the talent we have in this community," said Moon.

"Hands in the Community is all about engaging the community," he continued, "and helping to make it better for everyone."

Tickets are available at www.ticketfly.com. For more information, including sponsorship information, contact Moon at hncvisalia@yahoo.com or 625-3822.

Merle Haggard to Bring His Words and Music to Hanford Fox Theatre

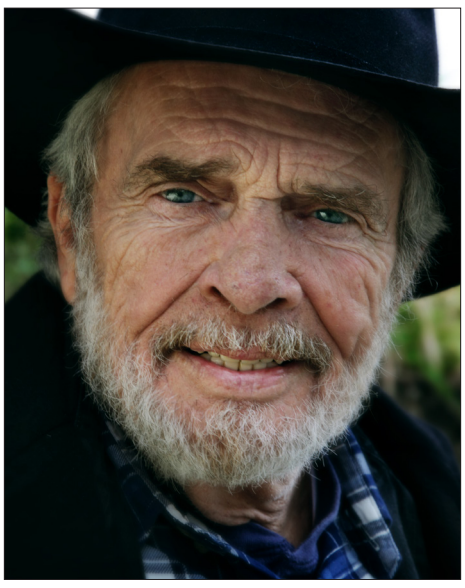
STAFF REPORTS

Country Music Hall of Famer Merle Haggard, who will take the stage at the Hanford Fox Theatre on March 6, is apparently not a fan of today's country music. "Everything sounds like the same damn song," he said. "It's true. Nobody's got anything to say anymore."

Haggard, however, is known for having a great deal to say in his music. His songs are borne of his own remarkable, troubled personal history.

Born in a converted boxcar on April 6, 1937 in Oildale, Haggard grew up listening to country radio and basking in the loving embrace of a close-knit family. Shattered by the sudden death of his father when he was just nine years old, Haggard slipped into a pattern of resentment-fueled criminality that escalated from minor scrapes with the law into a series of incarcerations at – and escapes from – California Youth Authority lockups. When he wasn't doing time, he'd get loaded and sing country music, sometimes for tips, but mostly just for his own amusement. By age 16, he was good enough that his idol, Lefty Frizzell, allowed him to guest on one Frizzell's shows at Bakersfield's Pumpkin Center dancehall. Nonetheless, Haggard was more intent on raising hell than playing music and the ongoing pattern of arrest, abuse by guards, escape, flight and re-arrest climaxed with an incorrigible classification and some hard time at that most infamous penitentiary, San Quentin.

Following his release in 1960, the ex-con slowly re-invented himself as a performer and with the encouragement



Merle Haggard (Photo by Myriam Santos)

of bassist Fred Maddox and the aid of Bakersfield TV host-musician Herb Henson, Haggard eventually found himself working as bassist for the Los Angeles country star Wynn Stewart. After Stewart presented Haggard with "Sing a Sad Song," the number that became his first hit in 1964, Haggard quickly established himself as one of the most dominant, creative and important forces in country music. With no less than 38 number one hits and a trove of profoundly influential songs, from controversial flag-wavers "The Fightin' Side of Me" and "Okie from Muskogee," to the excruciatingly sorrowful "If We Make it Through December," to the bruised romance of "Today I Started Loving You Again" (a song subsequently recorded by some 500 different artists), not to

Continued on p. 24 »

The Gatlin Brothers

Gatlin Brothers to Perform at Eagle Mountain February 28

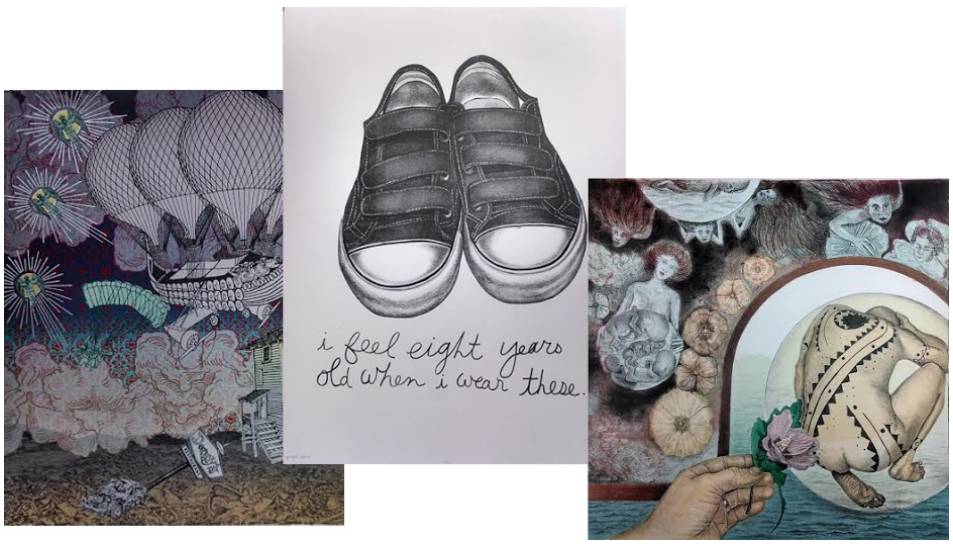
Classic country legends Larry Gatlin and The Gatlin Brothers, and special guest Joe Diffie, will perform their hits on Friday, February 28 at Eagle Mountain Casino.

Over 50 years ago, Larry, Steve and Rudy Gatlin started singing in their little hometown of Abilene, Texas, and from there went on to a four-decade career that has taken them from dusty Texas stages to White House performances, from Broadway to Grammy Awards to the top of the country charts. Raised on gospel music, the brothers first began entertaining audiences in churches and then with guest appearances on the Slim Willet radio and TV shows in Abilene when they were 2, 4, and 6 years old. Larry says that their history as "gospel music junkies" came from those early roots.

"My folks took us to those old-fashioned Southern-style quartet concerts, and it was love at first sound," he said. "My first hero was James Blackwood of the Blackwood Brothers Quartet. I just knew somehow from that moment that I wanted to be a singer for the rest of my life."

After high school, Larry went to the University of Houston on a football scholarship. He majored in English and

Continued on p. 23 »



Proceeds from sales at the PrintWorks Club Auction will go to printmaking scholarships and programs.

COS PrintWorks Club to Host Annual Art Auction February 28

KEVIN BOWMAN

The College of the Sequoias PrintWorks Club is hosting its annual art auction on Friday, February 28. The event will feature both a silent and live auction. Hors d'oeuvres and wine will be served.

Artwork will be on display at 3:30pm, and at 5pm a silent auction will begin. At 7pm, an auctioneer will be present and the live auction will start.

Prints by artists from throughout the United States will be available for purchase, many of whom previously served as visiting artists of the printmaking program at COS. In addition, there will be prints available by current and former faculty, students and program alumni.

The auction will raise money for scholarships to help COS printmaking students attend workshops and conferences, provide funds for the visiting artist program, and help with the purchase of tools and equipment for the program.

Four types of printmaking are taught at COS: lithography, intaglio printing, woodblock printing and screen printing. All of these processes demand significant practice for students, and often require costly materials. COS printmaking alumni and former club members are seeing tremendous success in their lives beyond COS, due, in part, to the very opportunities the PrintWorks Club provides.

COS PrintWorks is a club made up of students who take printmaking classes at College of the Sequoias. Some students are involved for the activity aspect of working with their hands and having a place on campus to try the craft. Other students participate because they are heavily interested in pursuing a career in art and plan to transfer to finish their bachelor's and even master's degrees in printmaking. The PrintWorks Club is involved in the community, participating in Taste the Arts Festival and Taking Art to the Streets event, as well as exhibiting artwork during the First Fridays Art Walk and other art exhibitions.

The auction will take place in the COS Art Gallery, Room 214 of the Kaweah building on the Visalia campus. Parking will be available in the lot on the corner of Mooney and Meadow.

All proceeds are considered tax-deductible donations. This art auction is the largest fundraiser of the year for the PrintWorks Club.

Kevin Bowman is the director of Arts Visalia.

Visalia Rescue Mission to Host Empty Bowls Event February 25

STAFF REPORTS

The Visalia Rescue Mission will host its annual Empty Bowls event on Tuesday, February 25, from 5:30-7:30pm at its Community Center location, 741 N. Santa Fe. The event is sponsored by nutrient companies: Nutrius, Diamond V, Elanco, Adisseo and Zinpro, on behalf of the international organization Empty Bowls.

All soups will be catered by the Vintage Press, with appetizers by Pita Kabob, and desserts catered by Visalia Country Club.

The event will feature a silent auction, live music by Jason Avila, and tours of the VRM. Attendees will be able to take home a handcrafted clay bowl. A professional potter will be on site, throwing bowls.

Empty Bowls is an international project to help fight hunger, personalized on a community level. The goal of this event is to provide money for the Visalia Rescue Mission to help feed the hungry and raise awareness about the issues of hunger and food security.

Tickets are $30 and must be purchased in advance. All of the proceeds will go directly to the Visalia Rescue Mission. For tickets or more information, visit www.vrmhope.org or www.ticketfly.com/event/476255, email hope@vrmhope.org, or call 740-4178.

Brenda Proudfoot Drawings at Brandon-Mitchell Gallery

Brenda Proudfoot will display her drawings at the Brandon-Mitchell Gallery at the Spiritual Awareness Center from March 7 through the month of April. There will be an artist's reception during the First Friday Art Walk on Friday, March 7, from 5:30-8pm.

The drawings, titled "Broken Open," are the images she created after two traumatic events in her life. Before 2009, she had not done any drawing beyond the art classes in public school education. At the urging of a good friend, she tentatively took up the pencil and sketchpad as a way to work with the news from her brother that he intended to die by suicide. One year after he died, she discovered a lump on her breast. Several months later, she had a full mastectomy.

"Once I began drawing, the images poured out of my inner landscape in an almost unstoppable flow," she explained. "The drawings represent the power of art as a pathway to understanding the course of my life, and to wrest beauty and meaning from the deep suffering I experienced—the almost overwhelming grief, shock and loss to body and soul."

Proudfoot is a yoga teacher and the owner of Valley Yoga. Her drawings are accompanied by quotes from the Yoga Sutra, a revered text of yoga philosophy.

"As a viewer, the drawings engage you first. Then you read the text. A walk among the drawings becomes a yoga practice, an inward-directed meditation."

"Immortality of Cancer" by Brenda Proudfoot.

Proudfoot got her start teaching yoga in Visalia at the Spiritual Awareness Center.

The center is located at 117 S. Locust St. in Visalia, one block south of Main Street. The Brandon-Mitchell Gallery is open during First Friday Art Walks each month and by appointment. Call 625-2441 to arrange to see the show.

Virginia Wilson's Photography Exhibition at Lindsay Gallery

STAFF REPORTS

The Lindsay Art Association will present an exhibit of photographs by Blue Ridge Photography's Virginia (Ginny) Wilson at the Lindsay Gallery, starting with a reception from 2-4pm on Sunday, February 23, and running through March 23.

The exhibit showcases Wilson's newest work, including images from her visit to Prague, and a riverboat trip down the Danube into Eastern Europe. Walking on the streets of Vienna, Budapest and Bratislava gave her opportunities to photograph ornate bridges and architectural details.

Danube Chapel photograph by Virginia Wilson

Wilson's photography features a strong sense of nature and a love of color. Traveling with her husband, Jim, introduced her to old world themes and architecture. Her love of abstracts can be seen in the reflection of objects in country ponds and rippling streams.

Wilson's work has been exhibited in galleries and shows from Fresno to Bakersfield, including in many of the mountain and foothill towns in between. To see more of her work, visit her website, blueridgephoto.com.

The Lindsay Gallery is open noon to 4 pm Fridays and Sundays. It is located at 165 Gale Hill, next to the Lindsay Fire Department.

NEXT DEADLINE: 27 FEBRUARY 2014

San Fermin, Son Lux to Take Cellar Door Stage on March 5

AARON GOMES

San Fermin will perform at The Cellar Door in downtown Visalia on Wednesday, March 5. Son Lux will open the show.

After making National Public Radio's "Best Albums of 2013" list, a rave review in Pitchfork Media, a feature in Rolling Stone, and heavy radio play, San Fermin is red hot. Their live show is a pastiche of post-rock, chamber pop and contemporary classical composition.

San Fermin is the work of Brooklyn composer and songwriter Ellis Ludwig-Leone. His self-titled debut album is strongly influenced by his unique background in classical music, which includes a job assisting composer/arranger Nico Muhly.

After finishing his musical studies at Yale, Ludwig-Leone wrote the album in six weeks while holed up in a studio on the mountainous border between Alberta and British Columbia. He focused on life's top-shelf issues – youth, nostalgia, anxiety and unrequited love – and tied these vast themes to different characters through vocal contributions from longtime friend Allen Tate, as well as Jess Wolfe and Holly Laessig of Lucius.

San Fermin

The first track released from the album, "Sonsick," tackles many of these larger themes head-on. "It's like a panic attack disguised as a birthday party," Ludwig-Leone says. "I realized that the most intense moments are the ones in which conflicting emotional worlds exist inside you, equally, at once."

San Fermin is not an album of singles but rather a sweeping, full-bodied listen with multiple distinct peaks and ambitious thematic connections. Ludwig-Leone composed all of the album's arrangements and lyrics in full, prior to collaborating and recording, noting that, "writing for a large group of unknown musicians infused the writing process with a kind of operatic scope."

Since then, the band has coalesced into a core of eight members in addition to Ludwig-Leone: Allen Tate and Rae Cassidy, lead vocals; Eliza Bagg and Rebekah Durham, vocals/violin; John Brandon, trumpet; Stephen Chen, saxophone; Tyler McDiarmid, guitar; and Mike Hanf, drums.

Kicking off the night will be tour support artist Son Lux, a.k.a. Ryan Lott. His debut recording, "At War With Walls and Mazes" (2008), earned him the title of "Best New Artist" by NPR's All Songs Considered. In 2011, he followed up this release with "We Are Rising," which Consequence of Sound described as "the dark, operatic middle ground between Owen Pallett and "In Rainbows"-era Radiohead or Wild Beasts' fantastic, operatic heights."

In the last four years, Lott has built an impressive list of collaborators including everyone from indie-rock darlings such as Sufjan Stevens, Peter Silberman (The Antlers), These New Puritans and My Brightest Diamond; to composers and classical world institutions such as Nico Muhly, Richard Perry (Arcade Fire), Judd Greenstein, yMusic, ETHEL, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Caroline Shaw; to rappers Serengeti, Busdriver and Beans (Antipop Consortium).

Production credits include arranging and programming for four major feature films, most notably "Looper" (2012), plus his recent score for the forthcoming "Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby" (2013). In addition to his commissioned work, the Son Lux catalog has been licensed for both film ("The Romantics," "Looper") and television ("Parks and Recreation," "American Horror Story"). As a composer, Ryan has scored commercials for a long and impressive list of clients such as Absolut, IKEA, Coca-Cola, Audi and many others.

Recently, Son Lux has performed at Carnegie Hall with the Young People's Choir of New York, held a weeklong residency at the Joyce Theater with Stephen Petronio Dance Company, performed with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and has shared the stage with Laurie Anderson, Philip Glass, Kate Davis and Dose One. He will be collaborating this summer with Serengeti and Sufjan Stevens and world-renowned visual artist Jim Hodges for a musical accompaniment to a traveling retrospective of Hodges' work debuting at the Walker Museum of Art this month.

Son Lux will be releasing his third full-length release via Joyful Noise Recordings, which positions him at the helm of a diverse and impressive ensemble of instrumentalists and singers including Chris Thile (The Punch Brothers), Peter Silberman (The Antlers), Lily & Madeleine, Ieva Berberian (Gem Club), as well as other previous collaborators. Meditative and heaving with energy, the album weaves disparate elements into a singular vision of a world both strange and welcoming.

Tickets for the 21+ 9pm show are $10 and available at Velouria Records, Cellar Door, and online at www.ticketweb.com.

Aaron Gomes is the founder and owner/operator of Sound N Vision Foundation, a nonprofit organization that brings indie bands to the area and sponsors local art events.

Leaving Austin

Leaving Austin to Arrive in Visalia on March 7

Central Valley's Leaving Austin is a modern-country group that is consistently drawing crowds and building a huge fanbase. The band's March 7th Visalia Cellar Door performance is expected to be packed-house, especially with the addition of opening Bakersfield band Truxton Mile.

We had the opportunity to ask Leaving Austin guitar player Davis Forney a few questions.

Leaving Austin has been steadily gaining momentum at Cellar Door. When and how did the band begin?

"The band was formed in November of 2012. Leaving Austin consists of members: Austin Machado on lead vocals, Davis Forney on guitar and harmonies, Michael Stevens on bass, Terry Ashford on keys and mandolin, and Ryan Chin on drums. We were all raised in the Central Valley of California, growing up on country, pop and rock n' roll. After pursuing many different types of bands we decided it was time to get back to our roots and sing some country our way, 'Cali Style.'"

You guys seem to have a refreshing new take on country music. What artists have influenced the band's sound?

"We all listen to and have played many different genres of music over the years so we try to pull pieces from all of those whether it be pop, country, rock n roll, pop punk, alternative, etc. A majority of our style and sound influence for Leaving Austin comes from artists and bands like Rascal Flatts, Keith Urban, The Fray, The Script, Hunter Hayes, One Republic, Colby Wedgeworth, The Maine, David Nail, Florida Georgia Line, Taylor Swift."

What can we expect from a live Leaving Austin show?

"You can expect one heck of a good time! We love having fun and giving our fans as much as we can. Expect to have t-shirts and cds thrown into the crowd, expect to dance your butt off, and most important to us, for you to leave with a smile on your face."

What is the main goal for Leaving Austin?

"Our goal is to connect with our fans and their friends. We want to produce music and a lifestyle that provides optimism in each and every fan's life. We want to really know our fans because without them we will never succeed. We want our music to change lives for the better."

Tickets for the 21+ 9:30pm show are $7 and available at www.ticketweb.com.

EVENT CALENDAR

MUSIC

February

Feb. 21 – The Quebe Sisters Band – 7pm
The Quebe Sisters Band will perform at Mavericks Coffee House. Limited Seating. For tickets call 624-1400 or visit Mavericks Coffee House, 238 E. Caldwell, Visalia.

Feb. 21 – Strange Vine – 9:30pm
Strange Vine and Chad and the MeatBodies will perform at the Cellar Door in Visalia for a 21+ audience. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

Feb. 22 – The Harlem Renaissance – 6pm
In celebration of Black History Month, The Harlem Renaissance, featuring live musical performances, will be held at Hanford Civic Auditorium, 400 N. Douty St. Doors open at 5pm and the program begins at 6pm. Tickets – $10 for adults, $5 for children – are available at Hanford Parks and Recreation Office and Longfield Center.

Feb. 22 – Burning Bridges with Possessed Tranquility – 8-10pm
Burning Bridges will perform an early show at the Cellar Door in Visalia. Tickets. $5 for 21+ show. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

Feb. 22 – Nightlife – 10pm
DJ Ren Rock from B95 and his crew present Nightlife at the Cellar Door in Visalia. Dress to impress. 21+ only. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

Feb. 26 – David Lasswell and the Rounders – 7-10pm
On Wednesdays, its KJUG Country Music night and David Lasswell and the Rounders at Crawdaddys Visalia, 333 E Main Street. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

Feb. 28 – Larry Gatlin & The Gatlin Brothers – 7pm
Classic country legends Larry Gatlin and The Gatlin Brothers, and special guest Joe Diffie, perform decades of top hits at Eagle Mountain Casino in Porterville. Tickets start at $30. For information, visit eaglemtncasino.com.

Feb. 28 – Audra McDonald Concert – 7:30pm
Tony and Grammy Award Winner Audra McDonald will hold a concert to benefit Hands in the Community at the L.J. Williams Theater. Tickets are available at ticketfly.com. For information about sponsoring the event, contact Lester Moon, 625-3822.

Feb. 28 – The Chop Tops with Motel Drive – 9:30pm
The Chop Tops, Motel Drive, and Deejay Savage Salvador perform at the Cellar Door, 101 W. Main Street, Visalia. Tickets $10 (21+). For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

March

March 5 – San Fermen + Son Lux – 9-11:30pm
San Fermen + Son Lux will perform at the Cellar Door in Visalia. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

March 6 – Gloria Trevi – 7:30pm
Tachi Palace will present Gloria Trevi-De Pelicula Tour 2014. Tickets are available at tachipalace.com.

March 6 – Merle Haggard – 8pm
Merle Haggard will perform at the Hanford Fox Theater. Tickets, $55, $65 and $75, are available at foxhanford.com or 584-7823.

March 7-8 – Keith and the Crawdads – 7-10pm
Every Friday and Saturday, Keith and the Crawdads are featured at Crawdaddys Visalia. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

March 7 – Leaving Austin with Truxton Mile – 9:30pm
Leaving Austin performs at the Cellar Door, 101 W. Main Street, Visalia. Tickets $10 (21+). For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

March 9 – Calidore Quartet - 3pm
As part of its North American and European Tour, Calidore Quartet will perform at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information and tickets, visit threeriversperformingarts.org.

March 11 – Salsa Tuesdays – 7pm
Every Tuesday night at The Cellar Door features beginner dance lessons at 8 p.m., music and dancing follows. Cover is $5 for this 21+ event. Partners not required. For information, call 287-7067.

March 11 – Cody Torres – 7-10pm
On Tuesdays, singer and musician Cody Torres performs at Crawdaddys Visalia playing classic Country and Rock hits. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

March 13 – Kenny Rogers – 8pm
Kenny Rogers will perform at the Hanford Fox Theater. Tickets, $55, 65, $75 and $85, are available at foxhanford.com or 584-7823.

March 14 – Marble Fork Band – 6:30-8:30pm
The Marble Fork Band performs at Cafe 210 on the second Friday of each month. The ensemble offers original music featuring a Chapman Stick 10 string instrument, acoustic guitar and percussion. Cafe 210 is located at 210 W. Center, Visalia. For information, 210life.com.

March 14-15 – The 2nd Floor Night Club – 10-2pm
Every Friday and Saturday, Crawdaddys Visalia's 2nd Floor Night Club features DJs and dancing to hip-hop, techno, disco and more.

EVENTS

February

Feb. 20 – 2014 Labor Law Update – 9-10am
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce continues its monthly seminar series, Visalia Business Academy, with 2014 Labor Law Update presented by Verla Oliver, SinglePoint Outsourcing Inc. The seminars are held on the third Thursday each month at Brandman University's Visalia Campus, 649 S. County Center Dr. Reservations are required, and may be made by calling 734-5876. Tickets are $15 for members, $30 for non-members or $250 for an annual pass.

Feb. 20-March 21-Indian Gaming Grant Application Workshop - 10am
The Tulare County Indian Gaming Local Community Benefit Committee (IGLCBC) is seeking grant applications and will hold a workshop at Porterville City Hall on Feb. 20. The deadline to apply is March 21. In Tulare County, $268,177.87 in grant funding is available. Grants will be evaluated on the merits set by California Senate Bill 621 including: law enforcement; fire services; emergency medical services; roads; public health; recreation and youth programs; waste disposal and water supplies; child care programs; mitigating environmental impacts and behavioral health. For information call 636-5005.

Feb. 21-March 8 – Revelation of Hope – 7pm
A free Bible Prophecy Seminar will be held each night at 315 N. Conyer St. in Visalia. Opening night features "Unlocking the Mysteries of the Apocalypse." For information and to reserve seats, call 625-9633. For information in Spanish, call 723-3008.

Feb. 21-23 – Life Leadership Conference
Life Leadership Conference will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, visitvisalia.org.

Feb. 21 – Perfect Little Planet at Peña Planetarium – 7pm
Discover our solar system through a new set of eyes - a family from another star system seeking the perfect vacation spot. The planetarium is located at 2500 W. Burrel Ave. (in the Educational Enrichment Center) on the southwest corner of West Main Street and Woodland Drive in Visalia. Tickets are available at the planetarium office only between noon and 7pm on the day of the show. Tickets are $4 for adults and $3 for children under 12. No late seating is offered once the planetarium doors close. For information, call 737-6334.

Feb. 22 – SJVCSS Historic Hanford Train Trip
San Joaquin Valley Council for the Social Studies will hold a tour of Historic Hanford. The tour includes the Dao Temple, lunch at L.T. Sue Tea Room, and ice cream treats at Superior Dairy. Teacher resources will be included. For information, visit facebook.com/sjvcss.

Feb. 22 – Donuts and Discussion – 7-8:30am
Vice Mayor Warren Gubler will be on hand for the Visalia City Council Donuts and Discussion gathering at Panera Bread in Visalia.

Feb. 22 – 2014 Chinese New Year Talent Show Competition – 11:30am-4pm
The Center for Integrated Medicine will host a talent show competition at the Boys and Girls Club in Visalia, 725 W. Main St. Two prizes will be awarded. First prize is $100 and second prize is $50. Contestants must register by calling the center at 625-4246.

Feb. 22 – Pixley Observation Deck Dedication Ceremony – 3-6:45pm
Witness the fly-in of about 8,000 Sandhill Cranes and 15,000 white-faced Ibis at the special dedication plaque ceremony for Barbara Hopkins at the Observation Deck of the Pixley National Wildlife Reguge. Hopkins, past president of the Tulare Audubon Society, initiated and coordinated efforts with Fish and Wildlife Service to open Pixley NWR to the public. For information, visit tularecountyaudubon.wix.com.

Feb. 22 – Wine Auction
Exeter Chamber of Commerce is selling raffle tickets for a Wine Auction tree. The winner will receive 109 bottles of fine wine and everything else on the tree. Only 500 tickets will be sold. The drawing will be held at the Annual Awards banquet. Winner need not be present. For tickets, $20, and information, visit exeterchamber.com.

Feb. 22 – Exeter Chamber of Commerce 91st Annual Banquet – 6pm
The Exeter Annual Banquet will be held at the Exeter Veterans Memorial Building. The event honors individuals, organizations, and businesses that play a vital role within the community. Tickets are $40 and are available at the Exeter Chamber of Commerce.

Feb. 22 – A Night of Wine, Cheese & Chocolate – 6:30pm
Sample wines served by local celebrity servers and enjoy the area's finest cheeses and chocolates at the Tulare Historical Museum's annual spring event. For tickets call 686-2074. The museum is located at 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare.

Feb. 23 – Wedding & Quinceanera Expo – 1-5pm
McDermont Field House and DJ Diamante will present a Wedding and Quinceanera Expo at McDermont Field House, 365 N. Sweet Brier, Lindsay. Admission is free. For information, call the Lindsay Chamber of Commerce at 462-4828 or Jorge Moron at 361-4940.

Feb. 23 – Meet and Greet New Judge Michael Sheltzer – 5:30-7:30pm
The Tulare County Democratic Party will host a meet and greet reception for newly appointed Judge Michael Sheltzer at the Lunch Box, 112 W Court St., Visalia. Sheltzer filled a vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Glade Roper, Tulare County Superior Court Judge. The event is free. For information, call 372-2126.

Feb. 25 – Business After Hours – 5:30-7:30pm
Jostens Printing and Publishing will host the Visalia Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours networking event. Jostens is located at 231 S Kelsey St., Visalia. For information, visit visaliachamber.org.

Feb. 25 – Empty Bowls – 5:30-7:30pm
The Visalia Rescue Mission will host its annual Empty Bowls event at the Community Center, 741 N. Sante Fe St. Soups catered by The Vintage Press, appetizers by Pita Kabob, desserts by Visalia Country Club. Silent auction, live music, and tours of the rescue mission are featured. In addition take home a locally handcrafted clay bowl. Proceeds benefit the Visalia Rescue Mission. Tickets, $30, must be purchased in advance due to limited seating. For tickets, call 740-4178 or visit ticket fly.com/event/476255.

Feb. 25 – Target Specialty Annual Winter Workshop Series–6:30am-3:15pm
Target Specialty will host a workshop featuring general pest/wood destroying organism, and Turf & Landscape/Vegetation Management sessions at the Visalia Convention Center. To register, visit targetspecialty.com.

Feb. 26 – Constant Contact Workshop – 1:30-2:30pm
"Supercharge Your Facebook Page" will be the focus of a Constant Contact Workshop at the Porterville Chamber, 93 N Main St., # A.

Feb. 27- March 2 – Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference
Tulare County will host this year's YF&R Leadership conference for young agriculturalists ages 18-35 at the Marriott Hotel at the Convention Center, Visalia. Includes tours, workshops, keynote speakers and specialized training. For information, visit tulcofb.org.

Feb. 27 – Get to Know – 6:30pm
Tulare County Library, Visalia Branch, will host a Get to Know event with Visalia Mayor Steven Nelson in the Blue Room. For information, visit tularecountylibrary.org.

KIDS

February

Feb. 22 – Science Explorers
Every Saturday, ImagineU Interactive Children's Museum offers special programs for young scientists. The museum is located at 700 E. Main St., Visalia. For information, visit imagineumuseum.org.

Feb. 26 – YU-GI-OH Tournament – 5-7pm
The Tulare Public Library invites young adults, ages 10-19, to play in a tournament.

Feb. 22 – Extreme Science Magic – 1-2pm
Kids' activities will take place every Saturday at the Tulare Public Library in the Olympic Room. Parents are encouraged to bring children for story time and a craft. Extreme Science Magic will occur in the Kids Space.

Feb. 24-28 – KCOE Spelling Bee
The Kings County Office of Education will host a Spelling Bee at Hanford Civic Auditorium, 400 N. Douty St. The bee gives Kings County students the opportunity to qualify for the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. For information, call Dee Tricks, Spelling Bee Coordinator, KCOE Lemoore Service Center, 589-7074.

Feb. 25-28 – 2010 Kings County Spelling Bee – 9am-1:30pm
The Kings County Spelling Bee will be held at the Hanford Civic Auditorium, 400 N. Douty Street. The first place winners of the fifth and sixth grade level will move on to the California State Elementary Spelling Bee Championship in Stockton on April 26. The First Place winners in 7th and 8th grades will be able to participate in the California State Junior High School Spelling Bee Championship in San Rafael on May 3.

Feb. 25 – Teen Game Night – 5pm
On the last Tuesday each month, the Tulare Public Library hosts a Teen Game Night in the Charter Room.

Feb. 26 – Tulare County Spelling Championship – 8:30am-1pm
Tulare County Office of Education will host a Spelling Championship for students grades 4-8 at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, contact Nancy Bellin at nancyb@tcoe.org or call 733-6734.

Feb. 26 – Anti-Tobacco Challenge Bowl – 9am-2pm
The Anti-Tobacco Challenge Bowl is an annual event hosted by the Tulare County Office of Education, American Cancer Society, and Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency Tobacco Control Project. Teams of sixth graders from Tulare County school districts participate in a game show style format of quick recall and response, answering questions about everything from the tobacco industry to the health effects of smoking. The event is designed to ingrain in students valuable information about the dangers of tobacco. The event will be held at the Visalia Holiday Inn, 9000 W. Airport Dr. For information call 651-0155 ext. 3611.

COMMUNITY

February

Feb. 20 – Homeopathy Talk – 6pm
A discussion about homeopathy will be held at 216 E. Pine, Exeter. For information, call 679-8718.

Feb. 20-22 & 25 – Cards and Mediumship with Psychic Diane – 12-4pm
The Crystal Barn in Visalia hosts Psychic Diane Wilson on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays each week. The Crystal Barn is located at 1331 E. Noble Avenue. For information, visit thecrystalbarn.com.

Feb. 20 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer Street. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm. A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

Feb. 21 – Web Browsing – 8:30am
Tulare Public Library will offer a computer class. To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the Tulare Public Library's research and information desk.

Feb. 21 – Tulare Lake Basin – 7pm
Rob Hansen, biology professor and expert birder, will speak on the natural history of the Tulare Lake Basin at the Tulare County Audubon meeting. Rob Hansen is the foremost authority in the field, amassing historical records of Central Valley floor natural history. The meeting is at Tulare County Office of Education, 2637 W Burrel, west of Woodland and Burrel at 7pm.

Feb. 22 Bald Eagles at Lake Success – 8-10am
The Tulare Audubon Society will hold a minifield trip to see the nation's living symbol. For information, visit tularecountyaudubon.wix.com.

Feb. 22 – Aura Photos and Reading – 12-2pm
Every Saturday, the Crystal Barn offers an aura photo and 10-minute reading. Cost is $15. Appointments are required and can be made by calling 732-8537.

Feb. 22 – Central Valley Line Dancers Class – 11am-12pm
Central Valley Line dancers will offer instruction at the Olde Thyme Co., 2459 N. 10th Ave., Hanford. Cost is $3. For information, call 483-6139.

Feb. 22 – Chinese New Year Party – 11:30am-4pm
The Center for Integrated Medicine and Asian Cultural Society are sponsoring a 2014 Chinese New Year Party from at the Boys & Girls Club, 215 W. Tulare Ave., Visalia. Event includes New Year customs and symbolism, cultural performances, lion dance, talent competition, booths, and Confucius Box of Knowledge with prizes. Cost is $5; children ages five and younger are free. For information, visit allholisticmed.com.

Feb. 22 – Sci/Fi Book Club – 1pm
The Sci/Fi Book Club will meet to discuss "Ancillary Justice" by Ann Leckie at the Tulare Public Library. To register, call 685-4503 or stop by the Tulare Public Library's research and information desk.

Feb. 24-April 2 – Lunch Time Fitness – 12-12:45pm
The Visalia Parks and Recreation Department will hold lunchtime fitness workouts at Anthony Community Center Gym on Mondays and Wednesdays. Registration is $35. Visit liveandplayvisalia.com for information.

Feb. 25 – Heart Health: Fats – 12-12:30pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District hosts free Nutrition & You Series "Heart Health: Fats" in the Blue Room (basement) of Kaweah Delta Medical Center, 400 W. Mineral King Ave. Speaker will be Alana Unger, Registered Dietitian. Information: 624-3448.

Feb. 26 – Heart Health: Sodium and Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension – 12-12:30pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District hosts free Nutrition & You Series "Heart Health: Sodium and Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)" in the Blue Room (basement) of Kaweah Delta Medical Center, 400 W. Mineral King Ave. Speaker will be Alana Unger, Registered Dietitian. Information: 624-3448.

Feb. 26 – Heart Smart: The Change Starts With You – 4-7pm
A free lecture/health fair on heart health will be held at The Lamp Liter Inn, 3300 W. Mineral King Ave. Free screenings offered beginning at 4pm for cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure and diabetic foot screens (fasting for four hours prior is required). Informational booths throughout event; lecture begins at 5:30pm with health experts and local physicians. Reservations not required. For information, call 624-2463.

Feb. 26 – Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group – 6-7:30pm
Marcy Johnson, Ph.D. from the Alzheimer's and Memory Center, will facilitate a support group at Quail Park Retirement Village. This group meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month. For information call 624-3503. Quail Park is located at 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia.

Feb. 27 – Heart Health: Sodium and Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension – 6-7pm
Nutrition & You: Kaweah Delta Health Care District hosts free Nutrition & You Series "Heart Health: Fats, Sodium and Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)" in the Blue Room (basement) of Kaweah Delta Medical Center, 400 W. Mineral King Ave. Speaker will be Alana Unger, Registered Dietitian. Information: 624-3448.

Feb. 27 – The World's Strongest Librarian – 6pm
Tulare Public Library's Last Thursday Book Club will meet to discuss "The World's Strongest Librarian" by Josh Hanigarne. To register for any of the library's clubs, call 685-4503 or stop by the Tulare Public Library's research and information desk.

Feb. 28 – Porterville Adult Day Services Rock-A-Thon
A 24-hour Rocking Chair-a-thon annual fundraiser will be held to support the Porterville Adult Day Services' Caregiver Respite Program and the victims of Alzheimer's disease or other related forms of dementia. For information, visit padsinfo.com.

March

March 1, 29 and April 12 – Fireline Safety for Hired Vendors – 8am-5pm
Porterville College will offer three one-day training sessions presented by the PC Fire Technology Department, the US Forest Service and CAL FIRE. Pre-registration and payment, $70, required. For information on Community Education Classes, call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

The Tulare Foundry in 1946.

Tulare Historical Museum Showcases 'Tulare Business Pride'

The Tulare City Historical Society and the Tulare Historical Museum are currently presenting a new mini-exhibit in the museum's Audio-Visual Room entitled "Tulare Business Pride."

The exhibit showcases a selection of business memorabilia from some of Tulare's most respected businesses over the years. The exhibit will be on display through April 26.

The museum is located at 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare. Hours of operation are 10am-4pm, Thursday through Saturday. The museum is also open the third Sunday of the month for free from 12:30-4pm through May.

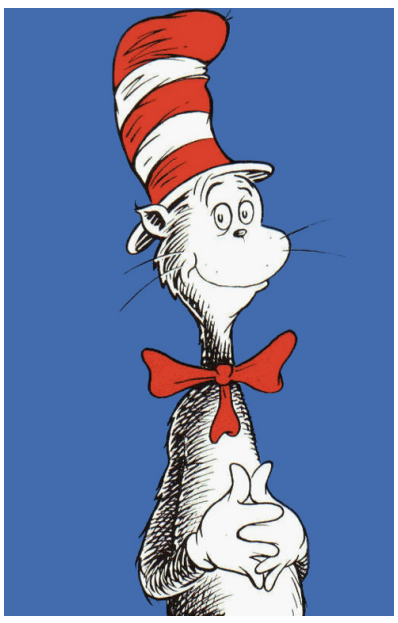
Admission is $5 for adults, $3 for seniors (55+) and Southern California Automobile Club members, $2 for students, and free for Tulare City Historical Society members and children under 5 years old.

For more information, call 686-2074 or visit www.tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

ImagineU Children's Museum to Host Dr. Seuss' Birthday Event

To celebrate Read Across America and Dr. Seuss' birthday, ImagineU Children's Museum will present a special reading of "The Cat in the Hat," along with birthday cake and the making of Dr. Seuss hats at 1pm on Saturday, March 1.

The National Education Association sponsors Read Across America, an annual reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on the birthday of beloved children's author Dr. Seuss. The annual Seussical celebration kicks off a week of reading across the nation as NEA members gather students, parents and community members together to share their love of reading.



A celebration at ImagineU Children's Museum will feature a reading of 'The Cat in the Hat.'

In May 1997, a small reading task force at NEA came up with the idea. "Let's create a day to celebrate reading," the group decided. "We hold pep rallies to get kids excited about football. We assemble to remember that Character Counts. Why don't we do something to get kids excited about reading? We'll call it 'NEA's Read Across America' and we'll celebrate it on Dr. Seuss's birthday." And so was born on March 2, 1998, the largest celebration of reading this country has ever seen.

Motivating children to read is an important factor in student achievement and creating lifelong successful readers. Research has shown that children who are motivated and spend more time reading do better in school.

ImagineU is dedicated to "education through play" and celebrates literacy every Friday with storybook time from 10-11am. Volunteer Pierre Gaston is often the storyteller. He will be at the museum on March 1, with his Dr. Seuss hat, to read to the children.

ImagineU, 700 E. Main St., Visalia, is open Wednesday through Friday from 10-4 and Saturday from 12-4. Cost is $5 for adults and children 2 and over. Children under 2 are free.

For more information, call 733-5975 or go to www.imagineumuseum.com

ART

February

Through Feb. 27 – Chicana Paintings Art Exhibit
The College of the Sequoias Art Gallery will exhibit the works of alumnus Crystal Galindo, "Multifacetica: Un Cambio de Paradigma" (Mutlifaced: A Paradigm Shift). The gallery is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 11am-4pm and Thursdays from 11am-7pm. For information, call 737-4861 or visit cos.edu.

Through Feb. 28 – Sofa Art Reads a Good Book
The Sofa Art Exhibit will be on display at Arts Visalia Visual Art Center. For information, visit artsvisalia.org.

Through March 22 – Fiber-Fabric Thread
The Kings Art Center will present works by members of the Common Threads Quilt Guild at 605 N. Douty St., Hanford. The center is open Wednesday through Friday, 11am-4pm and Saturday and Sunday from 12 to 3pm. This guild was formed 15 years ago by a group of artists who work in fiber to create both traditional and contemporary quilts, wall hangings and objects of clothing. Many of these artists have had work selected for both regional and international shows and have received numerous awards for their work. For information visit kingsartcenter.org.

Through April 26 – Tulare Business Pride Mini-Exhibit
The Tulare Historical Society and Museum will host a mini-exhibit in its audio-visual room. Tulare Business Pride showcases a selection of business memorabilia from some of Tulare's finest businesses. The museum, at 444 W. Tulare Avenue, is open from 10am-4pm Thursday through Saturdays. Admission is $5 for adults. Student and senior discounts available. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Feb. 22-23 – Exeter Courthouse Gallery of the Arts and Museum – 10am-4pm
Exeter Courthouse Gallery of the Arts and Museum is open every weekend. The gallery is located at 125 South B Street.

Feb. 23-March 23 – Lindsay Art Association Photography Exhibit Reception – 2-4pm
The Lindsay Art Association will present an exhibit of photographs by Blue Ridge Photography's Virginia (Ginny) Wilson starting with a reception Feb. 23. The gallery is open Fridays and Sundays, 12-4pm. It is located at 165 Gale Hill.

Feb. 22 – Tulare County: Varied Impressions
The Heritage Art Gallery at the Tulare County Historical Museum will display Tulare County: Varied Impressions. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Feb. 27-March 29 – Annual Student Art Show
The Tulare Historical Museum presents its Annual Student Art Show. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Feb. 28 – COS PrintWorks Club Art Auction – 3:30pm
The College of the Sequoias PrintWorks Club hosts its annual art auction at the COS Art Gallery, Room 214 of the Kaweah Building. Artwork will be on display beginning at 3:30pm. At 5pm, the silent auction will begin. At 7pm, an auctioneer will present a live auction. Prints by artists from throughout the United States will be featured as well as prints available by current and former faculty, students and program alumni. The auction raises money for scholarships for COS printmaking students. Hors d'oeuvres and wine will be served.

THEATER

February

Feb. 20-22 – The Drowsy Chaperone
Encore Theatre Company presents The Drowsy Chaperone at the Encore Theatre, 324 South N Street, Tulare. Advance tickets available. For information, visit tulareencoretheatre.org.

Feb. 20-22 – Little Women – 7pm
The Redwood High School Drama Department will present its theatrical production of the Tony-award winning musical "Little Women" at the L.J. Williams Theater in Visalia. Tickets are $12 and can be purchased at the RHS Finance center and The Ruby Slipper PAA.

Feb. 21-22 – Sleeping Beauty
The Enchanted Playhouse presents Sleeping Beauty. For information, visit enchantedplayhouse.org.

Feb. 28 – Four Lions – 7:30pm
"Four Lions" will show as part of the Visalia Fox Theatre's Independent Film Series. The film is a comic farce about a group of British jihadists who push their abstract dreams of glory to the breaking point. Tickets, $5-7, are available at the Visalia Fox, 308 W. Main.

March

March 7-8, 14-16, 21-23, 28-30 – Hartburn Hotel 2 & 7:30pm
The Kings Players present an old-fashioned melodrama with a surprise ending that will leave you in stitches at The Temple Theatre, 514 E. Visalia Street in Hanford. Friday and Saturday performances are held at 7:30pm, and Sundays have a matinee showing at 2pm. For reservations, call 584-7241.

March 20 – 20 Feet From Stardom – 7:30pm
Stella Artois Independent Film Series and The Fox Theatre present this film that focus's on the lives lead by backup singers. Tickets and information available at foxvisalia.org.

March 22 – Ralphie May – 8-11pm
Perico Productions presents Comedian Ralphie May at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Ralphie's popularity explored from the success on NBC's show, "Last Comic Standing." He has since performed on "The Late Late Show," "Jimmy Kimmel Live" and "The Tonight Show." Tickets are $16-$26. Tickets and information available at foxvisalia.org.

April & May

April 17 – Laughter's Good - Rodney Carrington – 7:30pm
Tachi Palace will present Comedian Rodney Carrington. Bingo Hall Doors open at 6pm. Mature audience only. For information, visit tachipalace.com.

May 1-4, 9-11 and 16-18 – Nobody's Perfect
Encore Theatre Company presents Nobody's Perfect at the Encore Theatre, 324 South N Street, Tulare. Advance tickets available. For more information, visit tulareencoretheatre.org or call 686-1300.

See more events online ourvalleyvoice.com

Author Cindy Janecka to Share Story of Hope and Inspiration

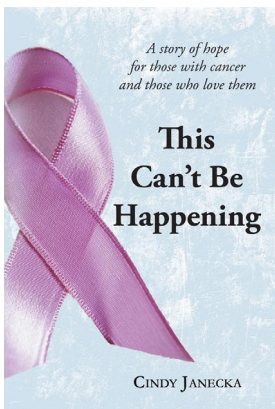
Gateway Church of Visalia will present its 2014 Gateway Women's Spring Fling featuring guest speaker Cindy Janecka, author of the new book This Can't Be Happening, her story of hope and inspiration through her journey of breast cancer and recovery. Janecka's passion as a speaker has inspired women to find peace and hope through God during whatever trials they may be experiencing.

Author Cindy Janecka

Janecka will speak at Gateway Church of Visalia, 1100 S. Sowell, Visalia, at 7pm on Friday, March 7, and again at 10:30am on Saturday, March 8. Dessert will be served at the Friday event, and brunch will be served at the Saturday talk.

Tickets are $10 per person. Groups of four or more wishing to sit together should purchase tickets at Gateway Church. Books are $15 and bracelets, made by Janecka's daughter Courtney, are $12. All profits go to further Janecka's message of hope for women.

Tickets, books and bracelets are available at Visalia Naz Church, Faith Christian Books & Gifts and Scripture House. Books and bracelets are available at Valhalla's and Studio 300 Salon.



For more information, call 732-4787, email lnishimoto@gatewayvisalia.com, or visit GatewayVisalia.com. For more about the author, visit cindyjanecka.com.

The Fab Four, billed as "The Ultimate Tribute" to the Beatles, will help celebrate the 50th anniversary of Beatlemania in America with a 7:30pm performance at Tachi Palace Hotel & Casino in Lemoore on Thursday, February 27. Tickets are $15, $25 and $55, and available at tachipalace.com, or by calling 866-4PALACE.

Laurel & Hardy

Silent Movie Night at the Hanford Fox Theatre

The Sequoia Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society will present a silent movie night at the Hanford Fox Theatre on Saturday, March 1. The show will feature comedies by Laurel & Hardy and Buster Keaton, accompanied by Southern California organist Dean Mora at the chapter's Mighty Wurlitzer theater pipe organ.

When these movies were originally shown, they were accompanied by a full orchestra in a few of the largest theaters, pipe organs in many smaller theaters, and a piano is the smallest theaters.

The show begins at 7:30pm and will run for about two hours. Admission is $10 for adults, and seniors and students ate $5, with children 12 and under free with accompanying adult. Proceeds from the chapter's silent movie programs are used to maintain the organ.

Buster Keaton

Kings Art Center Issues Call for Artists for Spring Show

Entry forms are now available at the Kings Art Center in Hanford for its annual Spring Show. Artists are welcome to enter work in the following categories: drawing, painting, photography, mixed media, fiber, sculpture and ceramics.

All two-dimensional work must be framed and ready for hanging. No art may exceed 48" in any direction. All artists must be 18 years or older, and entry is free to KAC members. Non-members fee is $10 per entry. A maximum of three pieces may be submitted. Drop-offs are accepted on Friday, March 21, from 4-7pm, and Saturday, March 22, from 10am-noon.

For more information, call the Kings Art Center office at 584-1065.

Gatlin Brothers

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quickly developed "a love affair with the English language" that later served him well in his songwriting. On the strength of his songwriting talents and exceptional vocal ability, his life was changed by the legendary Dottie West who saw gold just under the unpolished surface of young Gatlin. The early 70's found Steve and Rudy in college while Larry, aided by West, moved to Nashville to write songs that would be recorded by names like Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Barbara Streisand, Tom Jones and Elvis Presley.

In 1972, Larry landed a solo deal with Monument Records through friend Kris Kristofferson and invited his siblings up to Nashville to sing backup on his first two albums, 1974's "The Pilgrim" and 1975's "Rain Rainbow." The release of "The Pilgrim" landed Gatlin his first hit with "Sweet Becky Walker," and he found himself at No. 1 on the charts the next year with "Broken Lady," a song that captured him a Grammy. The same year, all three brothers were inducted into the Grand Ole Opry. 1977's "High Time," credited to "Larry Gatlin with Brothers and Friends," featured the No. 1 hit "I Just Wish You Were Someone I Love." The success of this album encouraged the brothers to become an official trio and in 1979, they signed a group deal with Columbia Records. When demand from hit records sent them on the road, the Gatlin Brothers proved more than capable of fulfilling the musical call on their lives.

Over the next decade, the brothers scored more than a dozen Top 40 hits, including "Denver," "Houston (Means that I'm One Day Closer to You)," Midnight Choir (Mogen David)," "She Used to Be Somebody's Baby," "I Don't Want to Cry," "Statues Without Hearts," "What Are We Doing Lonesome," "I've Done Enough Dyin' Today," "Take Me to Your Lovin' Place," "Night Time Magic," "Love Is Just a Game," "The Lady Takes the Cowboy Every Time," and "Talkin' to the Moon." In 1979, Larry Gatlin won the ACM's "Top Male Vocalist," "Straight Ahead" won "Album of the Year," and "All The Gold In California" won "Single of the Year."

Throughout the '70s and '80s, the Gatlin Brothers lit up major marquees and packed concert halls across America. Then, in 1992 after much soul searching and prayer, the brothers made a decision to stop touring. They ended with "The Adios Tour" along with an accompanying album release of the same name, and it gave the boys a chance to say goodbye to their fans and for the fans to say goodbye to the Gatlin Brothers.

"We just thought our time in the spotlight was probably over," explained Larry. "We had a great run and are thankful for it. We felt it was someone else's turn in the spotlight." Since then, however, according to Larry, a promoter in Delaware "made us an offer we couldn't understand...so we took it. Since then a popular ground swell, maybe not a large popular ground swell, but a ground swell nonetheless, has arisen that has persuaded us to do some selected dates that we are calling 'The Gatlin Brothers Never Ending Reunion Tour.'"

The show begins at 8pm. Tickets are $30. For more information, visit www.eaglemountaincasino.com.

Join us for the Dining Car
3-Course Lunch
Chef's Choice - $16
The Southern Pacific Depot Restaurant
207 East Oak Avenue, Visalia
www.depotvisalia.com
FOR RESERVATIONS, CALL 732-8611.

Renaissance

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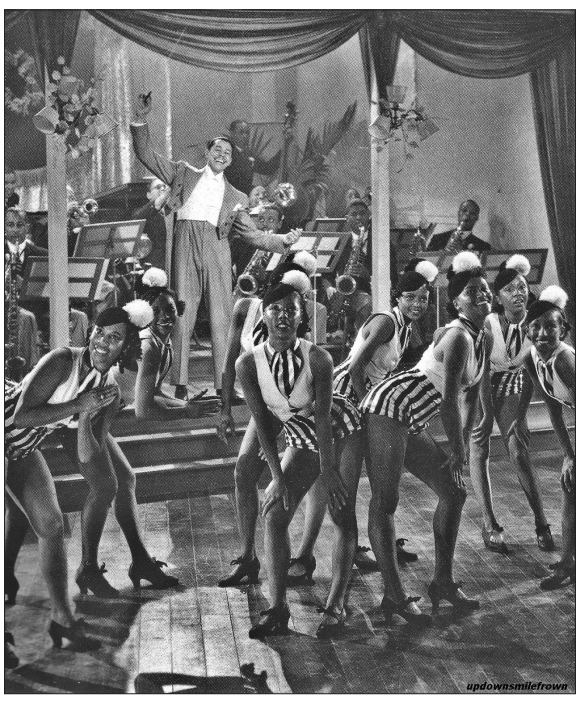
League), and developing race pride, including Pan-African sensibilities and programs (the United Negro Improvement Association and the Pan-African Conferences) led by Marcus Garvey.

The prestige of these revolutionary experiments caused African American intellectuals to look on African artistic traditions with new appreciation and to imagine new forms of self-representation, a desire reinforced by rising interest in black history. Black History Week, now Black History Month, was first celebrated in 1928 at the instigation of the historian Carter G. Woodson.

Cultural awareness and independence supports the expansion of ideas and creativity. The Harlem Renaissance gives proof of this with the evidence in its music, fashion and arts. Nothing brings people together quite like music, and jazz did just that by opening doors--although quite often the backdoors--to many African American musicians. The Cotton Club was one of the most famous "whites only" establishments, operating most notably during prohibition. It opened in 1923, on 142nd Street and Lenox Avenue in the heart of Harlem, and then in the midtown Theater District after it closed due to the race riots of Harlem. The decor of the club looked to mimic a plantation and the African American employees dressed as savages and/or slaves. Shows regularly included dancing, singing and comedic acts, and featured many of the best black entertainers and jazz musicians of the era including Lena Horne, Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Bessie Smith, Cab Calloway, Fats Waller, Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holliday. During its heyday, the Cotton Club served as a hip meeting spot featuring regular "Celebrity Nights" on Sundays, which featured celebrity guests such as Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston.

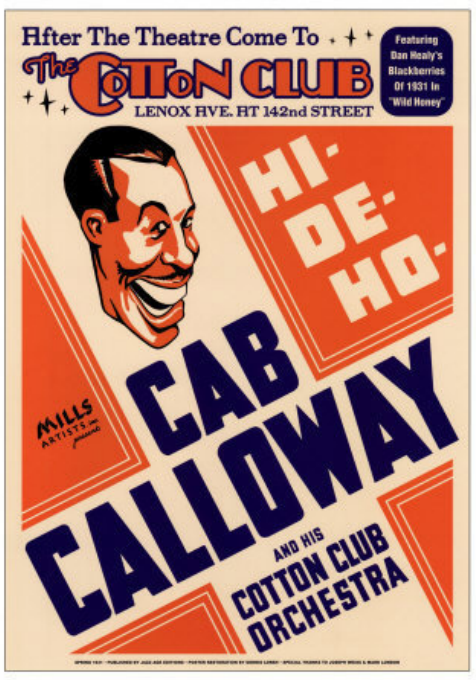


Cab Calloway performing at the Cotton Club.

The most well-known white man to bring attention to the "Harlem" Renaissance was undoubtedly Carl Van Vechten, whose music criticism extolled jazz and blues and whose provocatively titled novel *Nigger Heaven* (1926) helped spread the Negro Vogue, serving virtually as a tourist guide to Harlem and capitalizing on the supposed "exotic" aspects of black urban life, even while focusing, primarily, on the frustrations of black urban professionals and aspiring writers. Vilified by many but defended by the likes of Hughes, James Weldon Johnson and Nella Larsen, Van Vechten became a key contact for several black artists and authors because of his interracial parties and publishing connections.

"Morning" by Romare Bearden

Fashion was another notable part of the period. Escaping from the rural South for many was inspiration to experiment with fringe and fur styles that were extravagant but gave allowances for the equally extravagant dance styles of the time. Stylists pay homage to Harlem Renaissance fashion by continuously reinventing them for current trends.

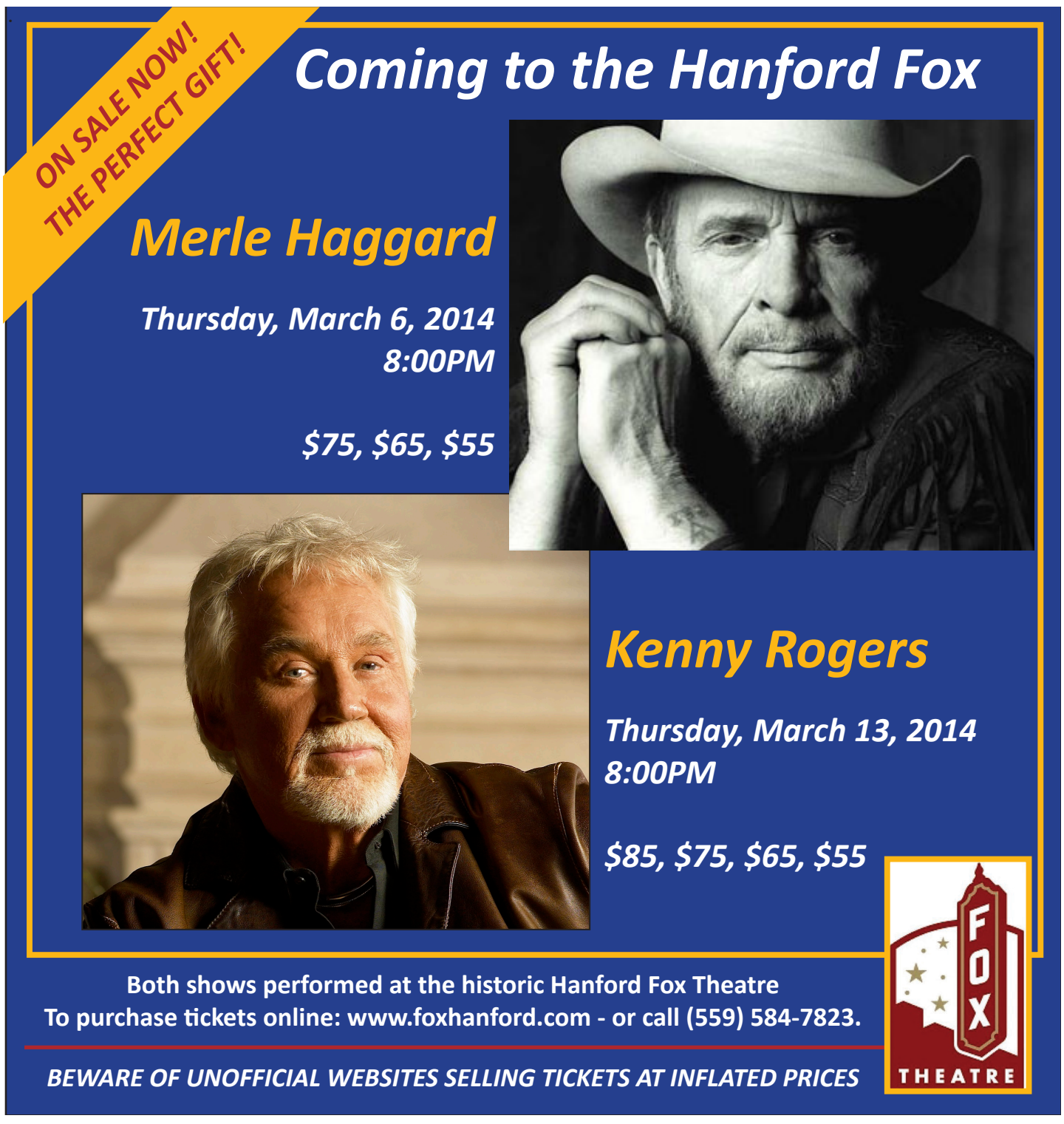


Many artistic contributions were made during the time and some may argue none captured the theme of Harlem like its artists. Artists at the core of the Harlem Renaissance movement included William H. Johnson, Lois Mailou Jones, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, Charles Sebree, Hale Woodruff, Beauford Delaney and Ernie Barnes.

The Harlem Renaissance is an important part of black history. Its influences can be seen in the music, fashion and overall theme of the black presence in American culture today.

The Black History Committee of Hanford will present a glimpse into this influential part of American History with a show that includes presentations, visuals of fashion and art, depictions of prominent figures, musical performances and more. The City of Hanford is also heavily involved through its recreation department.

"The Harlem Renaissance" will be presented Saturday, February 22, at the Civic Auditorium in Hanford. Doors open at 5pm and tickets can be purchased in advance through the Hanford Recreation Department. For more information, call 585-2525 or 309-3360.



Haggard

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mention countless awards and honors (multiple trophies from the Academy of Country Music and Country Music Association, recognition from the Grammys, BMI), his 1994 induction to the Country Music Hall of Fame and, most recently, the White House ceremony where he was presented with The John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts award for lifetime achievement and outstanding contribution to American culture, Haggard's impact on country music remains indisputable.

Such a forthright attitude is all too rare in both American society and country music, but Haggard's often brazen candor potently underscores his incalculable value as an artist.

Tickets are $55, $65 and $75, are available at foxhanford.com or 584-7823.